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BAND 19

TRILOGIA ALBANICA III

ARSHI PIPA

ALBANIAN LITERATURE: SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

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FOREWORD

This book is a sequence of essays on Albanian literature and folklore, some of them fully or partly published. While there are several works on the history of Albanian literature [1], a work on its sociological factors is still lacking. Such a work is the more needed as Albanian literature is largely an outgrowth of folklore, a social science.

The first essay, « Ethos and Ethnos in the Arbëresh Literary Tradition » [2], takes the reader to the origin of Albanian literature, in the first half of the 18th century. That period witnessed an interest in the collection and elaboration of oral, mostly epic, poetry and sacred songs by Greek Orthodox Italo-Albanian priests. The literary incubation of this folkloric and folk-like material, whose earliest collection is the Chieuti Codex (1737), lasted a whole century. In 1836, *Milosao*, the jewel of Arbëresh literature appeared. The poem, whose humble origin rests with De Rada's collection of folk songs in his native Calabrian region, is the masterpiece of the romantic literature that flourished in the 19th century and went on even after Albania's achievement of independence in 1912. The essay centers on a comparison between De Rada's poetic works and his own collection of folk songs, *Rapsodie* (1866). The comparison takes the form of an ethnolinguistic inquiry in the spirit of Vico's concepts of poetic geography and poetic economics. De Rada stands as the representative of the Arbëresh literary tradition in this essay, whose conclusion is that the tradition is a cumulative process of several layers of civilization to which non-Albanian ethnicities have contributed and which has preserved its original Byzantine flavor and its Greek Orthodox ecclesiastic stamp.

The next essay, « Shepherds and Peasants in Albanian Literature » [3], is a survey of Albanian literature from its origins to World

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[1] None is satisfactory. The best of them, the collectively authored two-volume *Historia e letërsisë shqipe* (1959-60) is informative, but biased and lacunary. The third volume, which is supposed to cover contemporary literature, has not yet appeared.

[2] The essay is unpublished. A draft was read by Prof. E. Hamp, who made many valuable suggestions which have helped improve this edition.

[3] A draft of the essay was read as a paper at the Symposium « The Peasant

War II, when the romantic and post-romantic literary tradition came to an end. The theme of peasantry cuts across the entire history of Albanian literature, including that of the diaspora. Indeed Albanian history is essentially a history of shepherds and free peasants, from the time they emerged as a distinct group in the Balkans (11th century) until the country's constitution as an independent state. The essay sets itself the task of identifying the principal types of peasantry in the various literary traditions characterized by confession that develop delta-like in independent ways to merge at a certain point, which is historically represented by the League of Prizren (1878-81). Of these types, some of which are characteristic of certain literary traditions (the Arbëresh sharecropper, the Gheg warrior shepherd, the Tosk exiled peasant, etc.), there is one, the peasant bandit, which is common to all. The reason for the prevalence of this type is sought in the endemic poverty of Albanian peasantry. A prose poem by Migjeni offers the key to interpretation: « either bandit, or beggar ». Traditional literature sublimates scarcity into heroism.

The writer who brings the epic romantic and post-romantic traditional literature to an end is Migjeni himself, an Albanian of Slavic origin, and the pioneer of socialist literature. The third essay, « The Myth of the Occident in the Poetry of Migjeni », is a study of that particular moment in the history of Albanian literature which represents its crisis [4]. Migjeni marks a rupture with a tradition lasting exactly a century (*Milosao*, 1836: *Free Verse*, 1936), a violent rupture, which the poet's precocious death dramatizes. The essay focuses on a segment of Migjeni's poetic parable represented by « Song of the Occident ». This hymn to the Revolution by the former seminarist is construed with biblical language. The ambiguity of the title («occident » here means decline, and Migjeni is singing to the victory of the proletariat over the doomed bourgeoisie) is traced to the ideological ambiguity of this modern revolutionary Christ who, because of his Slavic heritage which he feels to be discriminatory and embarrassing in a cultural atmosphere heavy with nationalism, both loves and hates the Occident, repelled by its capitalism and fascinated by its culture and technology (he died in Turin).

The fourth essay, « Contemporary Literature and the Problem of

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in Literature » held at Brown University (Dec. 1-4, 1974) and sponsored by the Consortium for the Study of Eastern Europe (Boston - Brown - Harvard Universities).

[4] Published in *Südost-Forschungen* 30 (1971): 142-75 in French, « Le mythe de l'Occident dans la poésie de Migjeni ». The author thanks the periodical's editor for permission to use the English translation of that text.

Peasantry », continues the theme of the second essay in the new socio-political context established by the collectivization of agriculture, the major achievement of Albanian Communism. Of the two antithetic types prescribed by the official doctrine of socialist realism, the rayah and the kolkhoznik, characterizing the pre-socialist and socialist periods of Albanian literature respectively, the former is unrealistic, a figment contrived — and poorly at that — in order to give salience to the latter, which is in turn naturalistic rather than realistic, a mechanical reproduction of the new social type of agricultural worker. Socialist realism is then subjected to criticism, which reveals it as a sort of neo-romanticism, strikingly similar to the romanticism of the national awakening period in its overemphasis on nationalism, its predilection for epic bombast, and its infatuation with folklore. The factual political isolation of Albania explains the revival of nationalism and the ensuing epic heroic fad in literature and the arts, which socialist realism fuels and fans. Yet some younger and bolder writers have recently sidestepped the doctrine in the practice of their writing and have portrayed aspects of peasantry showing their traditional ethics as well as old and new problems of everyday life within the framework of their changed socio-political status.

While the first two essays keep to a sociological method, only occasionally dwelling on formal literary properties (as in the case of Fishta), the last two essays link sociology with literary criticism. The essay on Migjeni ends with a linguistic analysis revealing his ideology, while the essay on contemporary literature involves axiological judgements on technique and style [5]. The relationship between literature and sociology is the object of the concluding chapter, which defines Albanian literature as a peculiar product of ethnic culture, characterized by adolescence and naïveté.

Two bibliographical chapters, « Periodization of Albanian Literature », and « Bibliography of Albanian Studies », complete the book.

« Periodization of Albanian literature » is a classification of authors based on such sociological differentials and opposites as religion and dialect, social class and cultural tradition, ecclesiastic or lay occupation, living at home or abroad, within a historical frame highlighted by such major political events as the League of Prizren marking the birth of organized Albanian nationalism (1878-81), the proclamation od independence (1912), and the advent of socialism (1944). Four main periods are thus delimited: 1. The pre-nationalist

[5] Some ideas on Albanian literature and especially its contemporary section come from my article, « For a Critical Appraisal of Albanian Literature » in *Përpjekja e Jonë* 1 (1970): 44-57.

(and largely para-literary) period of Albanian literature is an array of very disparate works written in three alphabets: Roman, Arabic and Greek, the product of local cultural traditions in complete isolation from each other. This preparatory period starts with the publication of the first Albanian book (1555), and ends with the publication of the first Albanian lay work of art, *Milosao* (1836). But since De Rada's literary activity before the League of Prizren is an isolated phenomenon, he is considered as the forerunner of the romantic patriotic literature of the national awakening period rather than its initiator. 2. Romantic patriotic literature which starts with the League of Prizren ends theoretically with the proclamation of independence, in fact with Albania's starting to function as an independent state after the Congress of Lushnje (1920). Considering furthermore that the democratic experiment following that event ended in failure in 1924, after which autocracy dominated the political scene, we can date the romantic literature of the national awakening period (1836) 1881-1912 (1924). Its subdivisions are still geo-cultural: *a*) Arbëresh romanticism, distinguished in Calabro-Albanian and Siculo-Albanian; *b*) romantic literature abroad (Constantinople, Bucharest, Sofia, Cairo-Alexandria, Boston) and comprising both bourgeois and democratic-populist writers; and *c*) Scutarene clerical and lay literature, the only body of literature with a tradition in the mother country. 3. The literature of the post-liberation period corresponding to the period between the two world wars and marked by four historical dates: 1912-1924-1939-1944, is subdivided into *a*) the post-romantic literature of conservative and conformist writers, and *b*) the progressive literature of non-conformist and revolutionary writers. 4. The last period, contemporary literature (1944-74), can be geographically subdivided into *a*) the literature of socialist realism in the mother country, a doctrine which is no longer the same after the Albanian cultural revolution (1966-69); *b*) Albanian literature in Yugoslavia (starting in the early fifties); and *c*) Albanian literature in the diaspora (mostly in exile).

« Bibliography of Albanian Studies » is a selection of studies on Albanian civilization and culture, including those of the diaspora (Italo-Albanian in particular). Scholarship is the criterion of the selection, its objective that of providing the student of Albanian civilization and culture with and adeguate range of bibliographical tools. Albanian studies in the past when Albania had no high centers of learning were the quasi exclusivity of foreigners. The situation has changed recently, and in two fields especially, linguistics and archeology, Albanian scholars are in the lead. Under the combined influence of Çabej,

the Albanian representative of the classic Austrian school of linguistics on the one hand, and Soviet linguistics on the other, a team of younger linguists have emerged, many of them specializing in dialectology. Archeology has also been advancing rapidly as a result of new excavations that have brought to light a variety of most interesting material. Some of the findings are such that ancient Albanian history is illuminated thereby. Albanian historians, however, tend to interpret these data from a narrow nationalistic point of view. This explains why Albanian historiography is still lagging behind, and the initiative in this field remains with foreign scholars: the Munich school led by Stadtmüller and, in Italy, Valentini (for the Byzantine and Venetian period).

In conformity with the criteria explained above, « Periodization of Albanian Literature » lists only representative authors while citing their major works (titles in both Albanian and English). « Bibliography of Albanian Studies » lists the more important books and articles on various aspects of Albanian civilization and culture, with particular regard to the humanities and social sciences: history; language and literature; music; religion and mores; politics, economy and geography; anthropology, ethnography and folklore; archeology and the arts; education, etc. (titles of works in Albanian and other South-East European languages are translated into English [6]).

This book, the third and last of my *Trilogia albanica*, was written with the assistance and advice of various scholars and friends: Annie P. Prothin, Muriel Kittel, Dr. Alexandra Cromwell, Professor Eric P. Hamp, and Peter Prifti. I express to them my lasting gratitude.

Minneapolis, December 1975

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[6] For details regarding bibliographical indications, see « Bibliographic Notes » preceding « Bibliography of Albanian Studies ». Books and articles referred to in this work and which are not found in the « Bibliography » are identified in footnotes. Books and articles listed in « Bibliography » are usually referred to, whether in the text or in footnotes and the index, in abbreviated form: *a*) Long titles of books and articles are abbreviated by retaining their beginning word, or phrase. Thus, *Forschungen* stands for (Stadtmüller's) *Forschungen zur albanischen Frühgeschichte*; *Dell'origine* for (Rodotà's) *Dell'origine, progresso e stato presente del rito greco in Italia*; « Për gjenezën » for (Çabej's) « Për gjenezën e literaturës shqipe », etc. *b*) Often quoted periodicals and serials are abbreviated as indicated in « Table of Abbreviations » preceding « Bibliography of Albanian Studies ». *c*) Works by De Rada are abbreviated as specified in « Periodization of Albanian Literature 2a' ». Roman figures after the title of De Rada's works stand for « books » or sections; Arabic figures, for cantos (for pages, with respect to *Autobiologia*). Thus, *Serafina* C 3 means Canto 3 of the 1887 (third) edition of *Serafina*; *Raps(odie)* III 17 means Canto 17 of Book III of *Rapsodie* (but *Auto.* IV, 16 means page 16 in Book IV of *Autobiologia*).

I.

ETHOS AND ETHNOS IN THE ARBËRESH LITERARY TRADITION

1. *The Albanian Avatar of the Hellenic Spirit in Southern Italy.*

Greek literature was born not on the Greek mainland, but in the Greek colonies of Asia Minor. Likewise, Albanian literature saw its birth not in the mother country, but in the Albanian settlements of Southern Italy, at a time when Albania was a Turkish province. The fate of the Albanian nation has depended on the survival of its language during almost two thousands years of foreign occupation. The Albanians were one of the last ethnic groups in Europe to achieve independence. Their history shows them eager to achieve domination rather than independence, which they did within the framework of multinational states, such as Rome, Byzantium, and the Ottoman Empire. Religion, which they changed and exchanged for political advantages, was not their forte. But they did not give up their language, the representative of one of ten branches of the Indo-European family of languages. This is true for the Albanians in the mother country no less than for the Albanian minorities in Greece and Italy. Reflecting on the history of the Albanians leads one to the conclusion that their survival as a nation rests upon a rather exceptional sense of values, based on their option for ethnolinguistic rather than political, or religious, identity. The very name with which the Albanians in the mother country call themselves, *shqipëtarë*, comes from *shqip* meaning « clearly », « intelligibly », *fol shqip* meaning « speak in our language » [1].

The Arbëresh literary tradition originated with the descendants of Greco-Albanians who emigrated from Epirus and the Morea to Southern Italy during the second half of the 15th century and the first half of the next. It is no accident that the bulk of these emigrants settled in those parts of Southern Italy (Basilicata and Calabria) that

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[1] See E. Hamp. « Albania » in *Current Trends in Linguistics* IX (1972), note p. 1626-7. The derivative *shipëtuar* « understand » is found among the Albanians of Ucraina (three villages located about 10 km. from the Azov Sea and about 40 km. from Melitopol).

in the Middle Ages constituted Byzantine Italy, which in turn nearly coincides with old Magna Graecia. A conspicuous part of them today are still followers of the Greek rite. And since Arbëresh literature is overwhelmingly the work of Byzantine Arbëresh writers, many of them Byzantine priests, the phenomenon of an Albanian literature in Southern Italy can be described as the last avatar of the Hellenic spirit *sub specie albanensi* in Italy.

The phenomenon is typically cross-cultural. Italy provides the geo-economic basis and the political frame; Greece the form of religion identifying part of the cultural heritage; and Albania the language and ethos identifying the ethnic part. Religion and ethos join to define the nature of the extraction, whose correct description would then be Greco-Italo-Albanian. Italo-Albanians could be more properly called that part of the extraction which converted to Catholicism, or were originally Catholics (probably a few). And although the latter have contributed their part to the Arbëresh literary tradition, that of the former is incomparably greater. It was the Byzantine Arbëresh who founded, in both Calabria and Sicily and almost at the same time, educational institutions, the Corsini College in San Benedetto Ullano (1733) and the Italo-Greek Seminary in Palermo (1734), whose main objective was the perpetuation of the Byzantine clergy in Italy. They also cultivated the Albanian language and developed a literary tradition.

The Albanian settlements in Italy date from the 15th century, when the national hero Scanderbeg sent, at the request of the King of Naples, Ferdinand of Aragon, an Albanian expedition to subdue Apulia in revolt. During that century Albania, under the leadership of various local princes, bore the brunt of the Ottoman penetration into the Balkans. At that time the Albanians were all Christians, mostly Roman Catholics in the North, and Greek Orthodox in the central part and the South. Their resistance took the aspect of a religious war against the infidel, and as such it was supported by the Kingdom of Naples and the Papal State, which were themselves threatened by Turkish invasion. Scanderbeg, called the Champion of Christendom by Pope Nicholas V, died in 1468, and Albania was overrun by the Turks. Many Albanians then took the road of exile. Many more emigrated from Epirus and especially the Morea at about the same time. They did not mingle with the indigenous population, but lived in isolated enclaves, marrying among themselves and thus preserving their language and customs as well as their Byzantine rite. Although with time they came to participate increasingly in Italian politics, they continued to consider themselves aliens in « the foreign land ». Poverty combined with their warlike instincts made them pro-

ne to joining unlawful enterprises and insurrectional movements against the feudal lords and the king, at times also serving them. Thus banditry, especially in Calabria, was one of their specialties, and they also made themselves notorious as smugglers (in the Capitanata). Piana dei Greci, their main settlement in Sicily, distinguished itself on a national scale by spearheading two of the most important revolutionary movements in the second half of the 19th century. It was the *squadre* of the armed peasants of Piana, « the hearth of freedom in Western Sicily », according to an authorizative historian [2], who, led by Pietro Piediscalzi, frustrated the plan of the royal army to trap the volunteers of Garibaldi [3], whose right arm was another Siculo-Albanian, Francesco Crispi, the chief organizer of the revolution in Sicily and later a Premier of the united Italian Kingdom. It was this same Crispi who, as Premier in 1894, crushed the socialist peasant movement of the Fasci Siciliani which had as one of its most influential leaders a physician from Piana, Nicola Barbato, later a leader of the Italian Socialist Party and one of its most popular figures at the end of the last century [4]. These precedents help explain why Piana is a Communist Arbëresh citadel today.

Distinction should be made at this point between Siculo-Albanians and Continental (mostly Calabro-) Albanians in that the former are more religiously-, the latter more ethnically-oriented. Some of the Siculo-Albanian settlements were the first to be italianized, and denationalization has been more conspicuous among them: only Piana and Santa Cristina Gela, a *frazione* of the former, and also — but only sporadically — Contessa Entellina, are albanophone today. On the other hand, the first Arbëresh religious institution, the Basilian Monastery at Mezzojuso in Sicily, dates from 1609. The inference could be made that the Siculo-Albanians are overwhelmingly of Epirote-Moreote provenance, whereas the Continental Arbëresh are the result of a mixture between the former and exiles from the mother country. Italianization among the latter has been much slower and whole albanophone villages, including many Catholic ones, are still found in Calabria and Basilicata today. Further evidence of the prevalence of the ethnic element over cult among the Continental Arbëresh is the presence of the Scanderbeg saga in their tradition, both oral and written. The national hero is conspicuously absent from the oral tradition of the Siculo-Albanians, and he hardly appears in their written

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[2] G. M. Treveleyan, *Garibaldi and the Thousand* (1948), p. 158.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 278-82.

[4] See S. F. Romano, *Storia dei Fasci Siciliani* (1959), notes p. 156, pp. 107 and 490-1. Also: A. Rossi, *L'agitazione in Sicilia* (1894), pp. 79-80.

tradition. Religious fanaticism, endemic among the latter, has been desultory among Continental Arbëresh [5]. The Vatican's decision to grant bishop status to a Byzantine Calabro-Albanian representative as early as 1733, while delaying that right until 1784 for the Siculo-Albanians, seems due primarily to the excessive zeal of their priests. Bishop N. Chetta was removed from his duties because of his pro-Russian sympathies (he wrote an ode for Catherine the Great), while D. Camarda, a priest from Piana, used the Greek alphabet in his writings. And Bishop G. Crispi has a poem at the end of his *Memorie storiche* which is a hymn to the Greek spirit re-civilizing Sicily through the Arbëresh « colonies »:

Un'altra volta
qui s'ode il nome di colonie greche.
Dei celesti la lingua in questo suolo,
nella bella Trinacria il suon ripigli...

Once more
the name of Greek colonies is heard here.
May the language of the Gods resound
in the soil of beautiful Trinacria...

It was a Siculo-Albanian priest, Luca Matranga from Piana, who inaugurated Arbëresh literature with a short catechism, *Dottrina christiana*, in 1592. He also wrote a prefatory « Pious Poem », a rymed octave in hendecayllabics, the first sample of Albanian verse. Another short catechism, « Il Cristiano albanese », the work of Nicola Figlia (1682-1729), is found in a codex dated 1737. The codex, a large 16° of 105 pages usually referred to as the Chieuti Manuscript, contains also religious poems, some of which are by Figlia and some by another Siculo-Albanian, Nicola Brancato (1675-1741). Figlia, who served in Chieuti, an Arbëresh village in the province of Foggia, translated and adapted into Albanian, just as Brancato, Italian religious poems, using Italian meters. Other Siculo-Albanian priests (G. Barcia, G. Barbaci, F. Parrino, N. Chetta) as well as laymen (G. Dara Senior) composed

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[5] Bishop G. Crispi describes as an innocent joke the custom of exposing « alien » Catholics to public scorn and laughter during the Carnival in his *Memorie storiche*, pp. 59-60. *Dialogo popolare tra un prete e un operaio sulle questioni greco-latine di Palazzo Adriano* (1899) is an anonymous pamphlet against the arrogance of the Albanian Byzantine clergy in Palazzo Adriano towards the Catholic section of the village. Addressed to a peasant-worker audience not long after the jacquerie of the Fasci Siciliani (1893-34), the pamphlet—probably written by a Catholic priest—is no doubt tendentious, but not devoid of documentary value, the tone being more defensive than aggressive.

didactic and sacred poems in popular style. Giuseppe Schirò collected them in a volume, *Canti sacri delle colonie albanesi di Sicilia* (1907), including some composed by himself [6].

The Chieuti Manuscript includes eighteen folk songs of Moreote provenance, the oldest collection of Albanian folk songs. M. Marchianò who discovered the codex, published them separately as *Canti popolari albanesi delle Colonie d'Italia* (1908). The songs were probably collected by Figlia, who was from Mezzojuso, the village housing the Basilian Monastery founded by Andrea Reres in 1609. The collector has touched the text, at times adding whole lines. Canto 4, a love song, ends with a prayer:

Inzot, ndihna Shën Mëri-vo,
ndihna Arbërit fanmiri,
te ku ndodhenë e dergjenë,
se ian pak të mierit-o!
Edhe sot për shumë mot.

O Lord and St. Mary, help us,
help the Albanians, bring them luck
where they lie and languish,
for they, poor people, are few!
Many happy returns!

The priest's prayer for the Albanian extraction threatened with extinction is followed by a ritualistic formula pronounced in festivities. The same formula concludes Canto 12 and, in a slightly varied form (« edhe mot e bukurezë » and « dit o viet e bukurazë ») Cantos 17 and 5, all of them wedding songs. Another wedding song, 14, ends with the prayer line, « Inzot, ndihmo, Shën Mëri-vo », already seen in Canto 4. The insertion of formulaic prayers and greetings in these folk songs suggests that the wedding songs were used in wedding ceremonies celebrated by priests as part of the nuptial ritual. No less than ten of these traditional songs are wedding songs, including the ballad of « Constantine the Younger », which is still performed as part of the wedding ceremony among the Byzantine Arbëresh. The rest of the collection is epic songs celebrating Albanian heroes fighting the Turks, or elegies lamenting their death. The last song, a variant of which is heard in Shestan, a village overlooking the Scutari Sea, develops the motif of recognition between a (Moslem) Janissary and

[6] The sacred poems reappear, in an improved edition, in Schiro's *Canti tradizionali* (1923).

his (Christian) sister. The collection is a selection, as its very title, « Kënkëzë të tjera të pleqrijsë » « Other Traditional Songs », indicates. From the bulk of Arbëresh folk songs, the collector has singled out some which, on account of their ethos, can be associated with sacred songs: wedding songs and songs against the infidel, namely celebrations of conjugal love and patriotism, the very pillars that uphold an ethnic group with a distinct form of religion. The incorporation of these traditional songs into a body of doctrinal and liturgical writings shows the interplay of nationality and religion as the forces keeping together the Arbëresh extraction with a view to its perpetuation.

The literary tradition of the Continental Arbëresh is less affected by clericalism. They lack a body of sacred songs of the Siculo-Albanian type. Variboba's collection, *The Life of the Virgin* (1762), the equivalent of the former, is a half-sacred and half-burlesque sequence of poems which are closer to the licentious poetry of the Calabrian priest Domenico Piro (alias Donnu Pantu) than to the edifying poems of Brancato and Figlia [7]. The case of Variboba illustrates the religious situation among the Continental Arbëresh in the second half of the 18th century. Variboba, a student and later a professor of the Corsini College, promoted the cause of conversion to Catholicism. The founder of the college, Stefano Rodotà, was a representative of the moderate wing of the Arbëresh clergy. They thought that the Greek rite in the Arbëresh church could not be maintained in its pristine purity and that the ascetic spirit of the Oriental Church had to yield to the milder and more mundane manners prevailing in the Catholic Church. The moderates were opposed by the radicals who were for the strict observance of the traditional Oriental liturgy, afraid that elements of the Roman rite introduced in the former would lead to its disappearance [8]. Moderates and radicals joined to fight and defeat the « traitors » such as Variboba, representing the Roman party. The struggle between the two factions went on for a long time and was finally won by the radicals. Through the influence of the French Enlightenment and the impact of the French Revolution, the radicals were open to Jacobinic and Masonic ideas of the time [9]. The transfer of the Corsini College from San Benedetto Ullano to San Demetrio and its housing in the old Sant'Adriano Basilian Monastery there

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[7] V. Straticò, *Manuale di letteratura albanese* (1896), note p. 214.

[8] See G. Ferrari, « Vita italo-albanese nel '700 » in *BBGG* 1964, pp. 37-44 (passim).

[9] G. Cingari, *Giacobini e sanfedisti* (1957), p. 87.

(1791) marks the end of the moderate hegemony in the Calabro-Albanian Church.

The radicals, especially during the bishopric of Domenico Bellusci (1806-33), president of the Sant'Adriano College, sympathized with Jacobin groups and the Carbonari movement, which were against monarchic absolutism as well as feudalism. The massive support they found among the Calabro-Albanians [10] can be credited to the Sant'Adriano College itself. The Calabro-Albanian intellectuals and political figures in the period preceding the unification of Italy were all educated in that college where the professors were enlightened clergy (the two Bellusci brothers in particular), or laymen closely associated with them. Among the students were poets such as De Rada (whose father was a professor of Greek at that institute); Vincenzo Straticò, later a socialist; and Giuseppe Serembe, the Albanian bohème. Vincenzo Dorsa and Angelo Basile, who share with De Rada the merit of collecting the Calabro-Albanian folklore, were also students. Among the alumni who achieved national distinction are: Domenico Mauro, the major representative of the Calabrian romanticism according to Francesco De Sanctis, a leader of the 1848 Calabrian revolution, and one of Garibaldi's Thousand; Agesilao Milano who, in 1856, attempted the life of King Ferdinand II and was put to death, a major symbol of the Italian Risorgimento; his friend Attanasio Dramis, secretary of the Executive Committee of the anarchic Bakuninian group Società, Libertà e Giustizia, founded in Naples in 1867 [11]. Oreste Dito, an Italian scholar who was also an alumnus of Sant'Adriano, comments on the college as follows: « That college shines in the night of the tyranny like a beacon of liberty. Many daring young men were educated there to the ideals celebrated in the works of the great Greek writers which they heard voiced by their teachers. An eminently popular institution, the College was the non-conformistic center of Calabria. The insurrections of 1844 and 1848 were planned and organized there and from there the idea of revolution spread to all the Albanians who participated in our upheavals as one body » [12]. The democratic tradition of

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 127-30. See also Angela Valente, *Gioacchino Murat e l'Italia meridionale* (Einaudi, Torino, 1941, note p. 212). The number of the Albanian « patrioti » [i.e. carbonari] given by Valente is so conspicouus — 4,000 — that U. Caldora (*Calabria Napoleonica*, 1960, p. 419) doubts it. See also Gemma Caso, *La Carboneria di Capitanata dal* 1816 *al* 1920 *nella storia del Risorgimento italiano* (Naples, 1913, p. 93) who points out the role of the local *vendite* (carbonari sections) in the Arbëresh villages of Greci and Ginestra.

[11] Max Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia* (Edizioni del Risveglio, Geneva 1928) p. 57.

[12] Calò, *La rivoluzione calabrese del 1848* (Catanzaro, 1895), quoted by Straticò, *Manuale di letteratura albanese*, p. 276-7.

the college waned after the unification of Italy, but it still had an impact on Albanian students from the mother country who started attending that school towards the end of the last century (Luigj Gurakuqi, Avni Rustemi, Gjergj Kokoshi, among others).

This explains why the Calabro-Albanian literary tradition, which originated with the College's foundation and grew with the latter, has a democratic character while at the same time preserving a Hellenic flavor related to its Byzantine origin. Inaugurated by Byzantine priests turned teachers and scholars (Pompilio Rodotà, a Vatican librarian, published a three-volume work on the history of the Byzantine rite in Italy, *Dell'origine, progresso e stato presente del rito greco in Italia* (1758-63), which is still fundamental to the subject matter), that tradition was continued by laymen in later times. Pasquale Baffa, a curator of the Royal Library of Naples and one of the top hellenists of his time, paid with his life for his participation in the 1799 Neapolitan revolution as a member of its Executive Committee. His nephew and disciple Angelo Masci published in 1792 — when the French Revolution was in full swing — a scholarly essay, *Esame politico legale dei diritti e delle prerogative de' Baroni*, which is an impassioned plea for a drastic reform of the feudal privileges in the Kingdom of Naples. Another Calabro-Albanian lawyer, Cesare Marini, a conservative liberal who described the Arbëresh wedding ritual in his *Memoria su' riti delle nozze presso gli Albanesi* (1831), also wrote a treatise, *Giambattista Vico al cospetto del secolo XIX* (1852), in which, while acknowledging Vico's greatness, takes him to task for his reluctancy to approach the «impenetrable and indiscernible», «talking little and badly about the other-world » (pp. 5, 7). The ascetic Byzantine spirit looms large in the works of other Arbëresh intellectuals, or in their ways of life: Baffa, a Weishaupt disciple, died on the scaffold like a Christian martyr, and Bishop Bugliari, his relative and friend, was murdered by Arbëresh fanatics; Giuseppe Serembe suffered from mystical paranoia, and De Rada was a deeply religious soul.

2. *Idola tribus.*

We have shown in our book on De Rada that his poetic production, which combines lyrical, epic and dramatic genres, is populated with heroes who are always projections of himself. Romantic poets usually identify with their heroes long enough to exorcise the figments of their imaginations through them. But De Rada remained a prisoner of his dreams all his life. When he was a teen-ager, he wrote a number of poems, some in Italian and some in Albanian, which are pervaded

by nostalgia for a homeland long lost to the Turks. Erotic feelings mingle with epic memories in these autobiographical poems, of which *Milosao* (1836) is the felicitous poetic solution. De Rada's subsequent works are variations on the same story of love and patriotism. The differences closely reflect ideological changes. After a flirtation with a peasant girl in his native village, which prompted the birth of *Milosao*, the poet flirted with revolution. In 1839 he was arrested and spent a month in jail. Soon after he fell in love with a Neapolitan countess whom he courted for years. To win her heart, he rewrote *Milosao*, casting the countess in the features of the peasant girl who is the poem's heroine. When the Neapolitan lady married a person of her own rank, the poet's loyalty was transferred to the Madonna. His cult of Albania and the Madonna eventually found expression in a historical figure, the national hero. But *The Unfortunate Scanderbeg*, intended to be the national epic, became instead a record of the author's unfortunate life, a life marked by his failures as a lover and a politician in his youth, and as a father in his old age, but somehow compensated for by his achiements as an Albanian poet and scholar.

Towards the end of his long life De Rada wrote an autobiographical work which is different from his poetic works mainly in that it is written in Italian prose. Immediately afterwards he published his *Testamento politico*. We can assume that at the end of his life the poet felt a strong impulse to face posterity openly. One notices that the four parts of *Autobiologia* were published in an irregular sequence, parts I and IV appearing before parts II and III [13]. The

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[13] A xerox copy in my possession (made from a copy in the Library of the University of California at Berkeley) has the following bibliographical indications: « Primo Periodo » /Cosenza/ Tipografia Municipale del Principe/1898 ». « Secondo Periodo » /Napoli/ Stab. Tipo-stereotipo di F. Di Gennaro & A. Morano/1899 ». « Terzo Periodo », same printer and date. « Un periodo /della sua/ autobiologia », no date and name of the printer. E. Legrand, *Bibliographie albanaise*, 1912, supplies the place, the printer and the date: « Cosenza, F. Principe, 1898. On p. 24 of this publication, one reads, « Fine del IV libro »: and this is the only « libro » divided into chapters (I-VI). Marchianò (*L'Albania*, p. 345) notes that Books I and IV were published in 1898. One notices that the first sentence in the latter, « Eravamo, come dissi, nell'anno delle Riforme di Pio IX... » follows none of the last sentences in Books I, II, and III. This in itself is indication that Book IV was published before Book III: had it been published after the latter, the *non sequitur* would not have occurred. Another indication in support of the thesis that Books I and IV were published before Books II and III is that the caption at the end of the latter reads, « Fine del II periodo » and « Fine del terzo periodo », whereas the caption at the end of the former reads, « Fine del I libro » and « Fine del IV libro ».

reason for this is not difficult to deduce if we consider the importance of the events in all four parts. Book I takes us from the author's birth and childhood, through his adolescence, to his participation in the 22 June 1837 Cosenza insurrection. Book IV consists of a personal account of the 1848 Neapolitan revolution in which De Rada did not participate. The weight this event carries in the author's mind is apparent also from its subtitle, « Un periodo della sua autobiologia », the subtitles of the three first parts being « primo periodo », « secondo periodo », and « terzo periodo » simply. In other words, the period of the 1848 revolution is that which really matters to De Rada, the revolution being the event that determined the course of the rest of his life. The irregular sequence in the publication of the four books seems then to be a question of priority: the author — he was eighty-four at the time — hastened to publish those parts of his memories which he considered more important, regardless of the time order.

Book I ends with an account of the failed Cosenza insurrection which De Rada had proudly joined. Recalling that episode, he writes: « Only two Albanians dared show up » — the other Albanian being Giovanni Mosciaro, a well-known revolutionist of the time (*Auto.* I,25). Why, then, eleven years later, did the poet remain a spectator in the Neapolitan insurrection, disappointing his fellow Albanians who had invited him to join in? In Book IV the author explains at length the reasons for his refusal, an explanation which comes close to apology. Yet *Autobiologia* is a panegyric rather than an apology. A reading of it leaves no doubt that the author considers himself a privileged being: a genius combining the poet and the scholar who provided the appropriate linguistic instrument for a poetic work intended to « educate » his nation towards the highest ideals of life (I,22; II,19); a « captain of men » (I,23); a leader who generously offered his services to his adoptive country, « l'ospite Italia » (III,17), in a crucial moment of its history (IV,21); a great romantic lover reminiscent of a troubadour in his devotion to the woman of his heart (II,18); an even greater lover of God, a devotee of the Virgin, whose personal intervention saved him from many dangers and prevented him from going astray from his God-chosen « mission » (III, 17) to be the « campeador » of his Albanian nation (IV,23).

This sense of mission is directly related to his privileged birth. The poet begins *Autobiologia* by telling us that his family is noble, witness its coat of arm with the « Dodona oak-tree » on it [14]. He

[14] According to the poet's description, confirmed by Marchianò (*Poemi albanesi*, p. 236) the Rada coat of arms has a silver field crossed by a vermilion bar featuring two stars and an oak-tree.

shares the Arbëresh general belief that the Albanians in the mother country are a rather degenerate race, the real Albanians being those who chose the road of exile rather than enslavement while keeping jealously the characteristics of the nation, its language and customs, its old form of religion, as well as its original name [15]. He also shares the other Arbëresh belief that the Italian natives are an inferior race. The Arbëresh made it a point of honor to distinguish sharply between themselves and the natives, while the Byzantine Arbëresh further distinguished between themselves and the Catholic Arbëresh whom they considered spurious. Due to his long stay in Naples during his youth and also because of his subsequent marriage with an Arbëresh Catholic lady, De Rada was bound to be less ostentatious about his Byzantine heritage and more appreciative of the Latin element incorporated in the Arbëresh tradition. And yet he was determined to remain true to his family tradition. But having also determined to be the Homer or Virgil of his nation, he found himself driven in a search for origins going back to the times when Albania had hardly differentiated itself from the ethnic magma of the Balkans. He collected some sporadic traces, then set out to piece them together, thus restoring to unity « the dispersed nation » (*gjaku i shprishur*).

Milosao grew out of his attempt to imitate erotic folk songs while casting himself in the role of a folk song hero [16]. We shall now see that the hero embodies his family myth. The never-ending process of shaping and reshaping that myth, culminating in the epic of *Skanderbegu*, parallels, reflecting it closely, his life-long work of collecting and arranging the Çalabro-Albanian oral poetry. *Rapsodie di un poema albanese* (1866), the summa of that tradition, is presented as a national epic in rhapsodic form whose scattered members have been arranged into a body by its publishers. The volume appeared under the joint authorship of De Rada and Nicolò Jeno de' Coronei, the latter a historian and an economist [17], whose noble name and title was intended to add credibility and luster to the unusual presentation. Jeno wrote the preface in which, after stating that the Albanians are a Semitic people that migrated to the Balkans and Italy about 1900 B.C., sketches their more recent history, which he divides into three periods. According to this scheme, some of the rhapsodies belong to the pre-Scanderbeg era, when Albania was free (Book I); others to

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[15] The Albanians call themselves « Shqipëtarë » today.

[16] See my « The Genesis of Milosao » in *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 4 (1973).

[17] Author of *La famiglia Bonaparte dal 1483 al 1834* (Naples-Trani, ?), and *Elementi di economia politica* (Naples, 1854).

the Scanderbeg period witnessing the nation's resistance to the invader and centering on three main themes: « victory, wedding, and death » (Book II); and the rest to the post-Scanderberg era, made up of songs that are mostly elegies for the lost freedom, and comforted by hopes of reconquista (Book III). Scanderbeg is « the principal hero » of the second book only, the hero of the other two being the Albanian nation as a whole (« the individual is transient, while the nation endures »). In his own editorial note [18], De Rada underscores the « original order » of the « poem », « a most noble monument of the medieval Orient », « contemporary of Scanderbeg and containing stories of mighty Albanian knights, martyrs of Christ and liberty ». He further explains that the present edition is an « approximate » copy of the mutilated original, adding that he resisted « the temptation to supply a line or fill a gap ».

Skanderbegu, whose first book follows *Rapsodie* by only two years, was meant to be the equivalent of the restored original. Both works portray the rise and fall of Albania in the late Middle Ages, the episodic nature of the former being patterned after the rhapsodic nature of the latter. We shall soon examine *Skanderbergu's* content, while also tracing the itinerary leading to it, from *Milosao* through *Serafina* and *Albania*. We can say here, by way of anticipation, that the epic was not De Rada's genre, and that he drained his energies in the wrong direction. He wanted to be an Albanian Homer, but he could not tell a story. Telling a story is quite different from arresting a fleeting perception in language sharply incisive or musically suggestive — De Rada's gift. An epic is a sequence of events organized in terms of time, whereas a lyrical poem is an event divested from the flux of time. Lyrical poetry in its purest form is fragmentary, made of flash-like perceptions and intuitions cutting through the spatio-temporal continuum. Epic poetry, on the contrary, portrays actions and emotions conditioning each other and evolving together with the spatio-temporal continuum. This is why epic requires the narrator's detachment from the subject of narration — an impossibility for De Rada, as already shown.

3. *The Search for Origins.*

De Rada's literary work is examined in this essay as a thoroughgoing attempt to strike at the ethnic roots of his Arbëresh extraction by following the oral and written literary tradition. We first describe

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[18] Presented, for modesty's sake, in the name of both editors

the ethnic frame of his main works, then investigate the ethnic frame and content of *Rapsodie* on which they are mainly based. A chapter on the history of the Arbëresh, with particular regard to their nobility, the Coroneans, aims at making the reader aware of the intricacies of the question, which is finally resolved, in the concluding chapter, in terms of ethnic syncretism.

De Rada's earliest writings, which are in Italian, point to an oral tradition according to which the ancestors of the Crati right bank settlers came from the Scanderbeg area (Dibër and Mat) as well as from Epirus, especially the part comprised between Parga and Ioannina (the Suliotes appear as Scanderbeg's allies in the manuscript « Ode albanese ») [19]. The Italian poems published in *Omnibus*, while keeping to the Albania-Epirus continuum, bring into the picture the Peloponnese (Morea): the prince of Maina, specified as a « foreigner », has married Serafina, the princess of Arta, thus becoming an Albanian ally. The same topographical picture is found in Proto-Milosao, except for the addition of the northern region of Dukagjin [20]. But none of these earlier writings mentions Scutari, which first appears, and ostentatiously so, in the title of De Rada's first Albanian poem: *Canti di Milosao, figlio del despota di Scutari*. Scutari is absent from De Rada's earliest works for the good reason that the city remained a Venetian dominion during the Scanderbeg period, and could therefore not be part of the oral tradition centering on the hero's resistance to the Turks. Venice was, moreover, hostile to Scanderbeg in his attempts to forge a united Albania whose existence threatened the Venetian possessions on the Adriatic coast, from Antivari to Valona. De Rada certainly knew these historical facts. But he chose Scutari as central to the poem's poetic geography for reasons of prestige and decorum, the city being a sort of Albanian Athens on account of its glorious past. It is possible that the choice was mediated by Vincenzo Torelli, editor of the important journal *Omnibus*, who launched the young poet on his literary career. Torelli was from Barile, a village in Basilicata, whose old section called Scutari has been — quite wrongly — interpreted as having Scutarene origin. And if Torelli could claim the latter, De Rada could too, so much more so considering that his family name has been continuous in the Scutari region from the late Middle Ages until our days. Prennushi's collection of Gheg songs includes one, No. 79, whose hero is Kolë Rada; and Radovani, a derivative of Radŭ, is still a family name in the city of Scutari. Radavan

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[19] Biblioteca Civica, Cosenza, De Rada Manuscripts 1 38(2294-99).

[20] The toponym appears in Canto 11 of the Serafina section (the Proto-Serafina) of the Copenhagen Manuscript (Rejse II, Mappe 2).

is also the name of a major Calabro-Albanian folk song hero, with whom our poet identified, as Cantos 39-42 in « Collezione di poesie albanesi », *Milosao's* embryo, show [21]. The name is found among the Greco-Albanians too: a Radovani Lunardo appears with other stratiotes in a Venetian document of 1541 [22].

We do not know when and where De Rada fell upon a document, or a reference to it, bearing the name of a person whom the poet claimed, albeit with some reservation, as the head of his clan. *Autobiologia* begins with a genealogical statement: « My forefathers were perhaps the descendants of Pietro Antonio Rada of Albania; the Venetian Archives of the 14th century include a contract of sale and purchase between him and the Doge ». In our book on De Rada we have dwelled sufficiently on the fact that many homonyms and toponyms in the 1416-17 Scutari Cadaster [23] reappear on a list of Moreote Albanians compiled by Sathas [24]: Buziqi (Μπούξη), Dara (Δάρα), Gjerbësi (Γκέρπεση), Lalësi (Λάλα, Λαλιώτη), Lopësi (Λόπεση), Luzi (Λούζη), Manësi (Μάνηση), Mazëreku (Μαζαράκη), Mazi Μάζη), Radu (Ράδου), Renesi (Ρένεση), Skura (Σκούρα) Spata (Σπάτα). The following names in the Scutari Cadaster are current among the Calabro-Albanians: Bafa (Baffa), Belushi (Bellusci), Kadikami (Cadicamo), Dara, Lopësi (Lopez), Mazi (Masi, Masci), Rada, Skura (Scura), Shpata (Spata). The poet's family name, which appears in both Satha's list and the Scutari Cadaster, has in the latter a wide distribution both as simplex and compound, masculine and feminine.

Now if « Rada » is a Shqip, Arvanitika, and Arbëresh name of Slavic origin, how should one account for « Milosao », which is neither Italian, nor Greek, let alone Albanian? Is the hero's name also Slavic, like the poet's name? In the same chapter in our book on De Rada, we have explained that « Milosao » derives from « Milosav » (< « Miloslav »), meaning compassionate. In *Milosao's* Canto 10, entitled « Easter Carol », the chorus representing the Arbëresh ethnic-religious community, addresses the hero as « zemër lipisiare » « cuore miseri-

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[21] Published by G. Ferrari as *Canti albanesi. Raccolta di Michele Bellusci del '600* (1963).

[22] C. Sathas, *Documents inédits* 8, p. 339.

[23] See Valentini, *Acta Albaniae venetae* 8 (1969). Tome 9 contains an index and statistics of Tome 8. According to the statistics, 1428 families live in 116 localities. Of these (judging from the names), 18 have Slavic names while 12 are of uncertain ethnic origin — Albanian, or Serbian, or Vlach — the rest being Albanian.

[24] I refer to the list compiled by Sathas in *Documents inédits* 4, Preface, pp. XLV-XLVI.

cordioso » — in De Rada's own translation. This is evidence that De Rada knew the meaning of the italianized Slavic name chosen to glorify his imaginary alter ego. His choice reflects the same genealogical concern expressed in the opening paragraph of *Autobiologia*. He certainly did not invent the name. We note by the way that a « Mile filius comitis de Scutaro » occurs in a Ragusean document of 1335. According to Jireček, the knightly family emigrated to Antivari (Bar), while a noble family derived from « Milo de Scutari » is on record as inhabiting that city in 1434-37 [25].

Rapsodie includes (note pp. 97-99) the text of an oral tradition recorded by Agostino Tocci from Strigar (San Cosmo) who lived in the 17th century. According to that text, after Scanderbeg's death, four Venetian ships carried a number of North-Albanian exiles under the leadership of John Castrioti, Scanderbeg's son, Marco de Mathia, prince of the homonymous region, and two Scutarene lords, Cola Marc -Shini and Elia Mallisi, sailing from Pastrović in Montenegro. Tocci's narrative is a mixture of history and legend characteristic of oral tradition (Chimara and Scutari are divided by the Bojana river; Pastrović, a family name, appears as a seaport, etc.); but the names seem to be historical. Mallisi (Malësi? Mal-i-zi?) occurs in the Scutari Cadaster along with other names. One of these is Andrea Omoy who is, together with his nephew Coaicin, son of Radizo, a feudatary of Balezo (Balesium, Ballec), a locality situated at the foot of Marinay (Maranaj), a mountain north-east of Scutari [26]. Barletius mentions Blasius Humoj as a Scutarene knight in his *De obsidione Scutari* (end of Book II). In *Ṣkanderbegu* I 5 — first drafted in 1838, i.e. two years after *Milosao's* publication — Elia Mallisi, Cola Humoi and Marco de Mathia appear among the Albanian leaders in the battle for Scutari together with Milosao, prince of Scutari, and Radavan, his cousin from Ioannina. We can infer that De Rada knew about the recorded oral tradition as well as Barletius about the time he was preparing *Milosao* for publication. But it is hard to tell whether the hero's name in that poem comes from an oral tradition that has been lost — it never appears in the Arbëresh literary tradition —, or a historical source. Be that as it may, the conspicuous presence of Slavic onomastic in his works is indeed striking. It cannot be an accident that the heroes of his major works, with the exception of Scanderbeg, all have Slavic names: Milosao in the homonymous poem; Bosdar in *Serafina*; Vladen in *Albania*; Radavan and Miloshin

[25] Jireček. « Die Romanen in den Städten Dalmatiens » in *DKWW(ph)* 11 (1897), p. 43.

[26] Valentini *Acta Albaniae veneta* 8, pp. 213 and 216.

(—*šin* is a characteristically Slavic suffix) and probably also the son of Fuha in *Skanderbegu*. Virility in De Rada has a Slavic stamp [27]. This is perhaps because the Slavs, who occupy the northern part of the Balkan peninsula, loom relatively big and strong in the imagination of a southerner such as De Rada. By contrast, womanhood has a Mediterranean ring in his works. His heroines receive either Greek names, such as Eugloe in « Poema albanese », the daughter of Cologrea (καλογραῖα « nun ») in *Milosao*; Delia and Adine (αἰδή « modesty ») in *Albania*; Agatë, Olympia, Gonetë, Frosinë (εὐφρωσύνη) « mirth ») in *Skanderbegu*; Mavrogenia in *Serafina* C; or Hebrew names — and these are all idealized women — such as Serafinë in the homonymous poem; Anmaria in *Albania*; Gavrile in *Skanderbegu* [28]. Albanian names are not lacking inasmuch as De Rada's works teem with Albanian princes and nobles. But except for a few, such as Guma in *Serafina* B and Filja and Dara in *Skanderbegu*, heroes with Albanian names are either secondary or mere appearances. A few are De Rada's own inventions, such as Fjaleve (*Serafina* B), probably from *fjalj* + *Eva*, « word of Eva », « a woman's word » meaning « fickle »; or Masgrave (*Albania* B), perhaps from *mas* (< mbas) + *grave*, « after women », i.e. « lady-killer ». Other names, also invented, point to linguistic syncretism: Videlaide (*Albania* B); Imotoe, Vantisanë, Paraile, Monush (*Skanderbegu*); Evodë (*Serafina* C).

4. *Poetic Geography.*

It was Vico who in *La scienza nuova* first investigated geography, along with other social sciences, as a source of information concerning civilizations that have not gone beyond the mythic stage. The geography found in De Rada's works, based as it is on oral traditions, can be profitably submitted to a Viconian interpretation.

Let us start with *Milosao*. In the poem's last canto, the hero is shown dying on a battleground overlooking Scutari, while a river flows nearby whose name is Vodhi (Vode in the Italian translation). « Voda » means « water » in Slavic. One wonders why De Rada uses a tautology such as « ljum'i Vodhit » « the river of water », instead of designating the river with its proper name, Drin, or Kīr. Was he ignorant of them and the meaning of « voda »? And how did this Slavic word reach him in Calabria? An analogous phrase, « ljumë i Teodorit » « the river of Theodorus » in Canto 18 suggests that he

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[27] « Astír » ἀστήρ « star », a knight in *Serafina*, is an exception.
[28] Italian names are rare: Viola in *Skanderbegu*, Emilia in *Serafina* C.

thought of « ljum'i Vodhit » as a toponym. A creek named Voido-Mati, originating from Vicos in Lower Zagori, flows into the Vjosa (Aōs) river in the proximity of Konitsa [29]. Zagori is mentioned in « Adine » (*Albania*), a story which has Ioannina for setting [30]. Canto 11 of *Serafina* A, « Fjaleve », has the same setting, with a river flowing in a mountainous zone, « lumé Imadh » « the great river » — « il fiume Ematio » in the author's translation [31]. It is appropriate to identify this mountainous setting as the northern part of the Pindus range, probably the original region of the poet's ancestors. Canto 1 brings Thessaly into the picture: a dove coming from Tempe awakens the hero in his home. Canto 2 introduces Macedonia. In that canto the narrator compliments a girl whom he meets at a fountain in a locality near Macchia by telling her that she is more beautiful that the girls of Salonika where he spent his adolescence. Here the narrator is both the poet himself and his imaginary prince. Macchia, the poet's birthplace, is thus related to both Scutari and various localities in Greece, Salonika and Tempe, which fall slightly outside the Greek area colonized by the Albanians in the 14th century. And since Parga, an Epirote seaport is mentioned in relation with the flight of Miloshin, the Epirote variant of the Scutarene Milosa(v), we can assume that the line Scutari-Salonika-Tempe-Parga-Macchia allegorizes the Albanian migrations first to Northern Greece and then to Southern Italy. Canto 15 mentions a migration from Hydra, an island south of Argolis, to Calabria. But since this migration symbolizing that of the Albanian Moreotes is no longer found in *Milosao* B, we can dispense with it, considering it a mark of the author's sympathy for the Greek revolution (in which the Albanian sailors of Hydra played such an important part) rather than a trace of an oral tradition (no migration from Hydra ever occurred).

The setting of *Serafina* A is Epirus, and specifically Ioannina, Arta and Silagora. Salagora (Salaora) is a small port on the river Artinos (Arachthos) south of Arta in the proximity of the Ambracian Bay [32]. « Silagora » is a compound of « Sila » and « gora » (= « hora » χώρα, « country », « town »), an ethnic compound relating Arta to Sila Grande, De Rada's native region, via Chimara — Silagora is located

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[29] A. Philippson, *Die Griechischen Landschaften. Der Nordwesten der Griechischen Halbinsel: Epirus und der Pindos.* II, Part 1 (1956), p. 38 E. Kirsten (Appendix, *ibid.*) notes that east of Grevena is located Vodensko (Polyneri); north of Grevena, Vodevina.

[30] P. 314 (Italian translated text).

[31] P. 62 (Italian translated text).

[32] Maltebrun, *Universal Geography* 6 (1827), p. 181, has Salagora: Philippson, Salaora (*op. cit.*, p. 120).

in the Himarë district, according to *Skanderbegu's* prologue. The toponym suggests that Macchia and the other Arbëresh villages on the Crati river were founded by Epirotes. The marriage of Serafinë, princess of Arta, with Nicola Dukagjini, prince of Zadrimë (Slavic *za* « behind » + Drin—the main Albanian river) symbolizes the ethnic continuum Albania-Epirus. We have a triangular figure: Dukagjin — Bay of Ambracia — Sila Grande, with Arta, the capital of Epirus, as focal point.

In the works preceding *Milosao*, Serafinë is married to a Greek Moreote lord, whereas in the works following that poem she appears as the wife of a North-Albanian prince. Why this shift? De Rada wrote his earliest poems in his « Greek » Sila, but *Milosao* in Naples, where he went to complete his education. There he met some Arbëresh from various parts of Italy whose traditions differed considerably from those of his elders. Two of them, Emanuele Bidera from Piana dei Greci, and Vincenzo Torelli from Barile, seem to have exercised a considerable influence on him [33]. These fellow Arbëresh on the one hand, and his various readings on the other [34], deprovincialized the young man from Macchia, now a university student in the Kingdom's capital. His perspective on Albania changed consequently, embracing

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[33] Bidera (1784-1858) taught speech and drama in his school at Naples when De Rada first met him. The poet's mixed feelings about his recitation experiences at Bidera's school are found in *Auto.* I, 20. Another student, the critic Francesco De Sanctis, had similar feelings—he refers not altogether approvingly to Bidera's theoretic work, *L'arte di declamare* (1828) in his *La giovinezza* (Einaudi, Torino, 1961), p. 85. Bidera was a prolific playwright and librettist. He is the author of a drama, *La divisione de' beni*; two tragedies, *Alessandro re dei Molossi* and *I Sibariti*; and many lyrical tragedies, including *Elena Castriota.* He also wrote comedies, which he later collected in *Teatro edito ed inedito* (Naples, 1854). As librettist of the S. Carlo Theater in Naples, he wrote many libretti for various composers, including *Gemma di Virgy* and *Marin Faliero* for Donizetti. His best work, however, is *Passeggiata per Napoli e contorni* (1884), a folkloric work to which E. Cione often refers in his *Napoli romantica*: *1830-1848* (« Domus », Milan, 1944). *Passeggiate pelasgiche* (1940-1), a work on Albanian history and folklore, includes De Rada's « Identità degli Albanesi co' Pelasgi ». It was Bidera who persuaded De Rada to publish *Milosao* (*Auto,* I, 21), while also trying to dissuade him from engaging in subversive activities against the Bourbon regime (*Auto,* II, 14). - Torelli was editor of *Omnibus,* a literary periodical; *L'Omnibus pittoresco,* an illustrated magazine; and *La Sirena,* another periodical. *L'Omnibus pittoresco* includes a great deal of folklore in which Greece is well represented. Torelli encouraged De Rada in his poetic attempts (*Auto,* I, 20), publishing some of his poetic compositions in *Omnibus.*

[34] *Antichità* contains references to Thucydides, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini and, among the Arbëresh, Angelo Masci, Giuseppe Crispi, Vincenzo Dorsa, Emanuela Bidera, while *Rapsodie* mentions Barletius (p. 67).

the Pan-Albanian world and providing the geographical background for *Milosao.*

We now consider the topography of *Albania,* a work standing mid-way between the « lyrical romance » which *Milosao* is and the national epic which *Skanderbegu* was meant to be. *Albania,* published in 1874 as the second part of *Poesie albanesi* — the first part of it being *Milosao* B —, contains three stories: « Anmaria Cominiate », « Christmas Eve »; and « Adine ». The second edition includes a fourth story, « Videlaide ». In a prefatory note to the first edition, Albania and Greece are said to be sister nations, both derived from a common stem, the Pelasgians [35]. But the *primogenitura* belongs to the Albanians — the author wishes that Greece may resurge with Albanian help. In another note (p. 350), he says that the Pelasgian-Albanian language is a very old one and has affinities with the Japhetic and Semitic languages: God's name in Hebraic, « ja-u », is close to Alb. « jam u » « I am ». De Rada was convinced of the Semitic origin of the Albanians, a dominant theory in his times.

« Anmaria Cominiate » has its setting in Cattaro (Kotor) in Montenegro. A note (p. 349) specifies that Cattaro was part of Albania in the 15th century — which is right —, a possession of Arianites Comnenius (« Cominiate ») [36] — which is wrong. After Arianites' death, Cat-

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[35] In *Antichità,* the author identifies the two branches as the Ionians and the Dorians (the latter fused with the Greeks in later times, p. 22). The discord in the *Iliad* between the « Pelasgian Achilles » and the « Hellenic Atrides » represents ethnic differences (*ibid.*). Herodotus called the Pelasgians living north of Greece barbarians, while subsequent authors gave that epithet to the Epirotes and the Macedonians, whose descendants the Albanians are (p. 18). According to Herodotus, a Pelasgian tribe settled in Phrygia, thus giving rise to the Trojans (p. 4). No wonder the Hellenic divinities and many Homeric heroes have Pelasgian-Albanian names. For instance, « Alexander », the name that Hecuba, following her dream of begetting a torch, gave Paris, can be explained by Alb. « ligs-andër » « dal mal sogno » « [the one named] after the bad dream » (p. 19). And since a Trojan, Aeneas, founded Rome, we should not be surprised at running across so many Pelasgian-Albanian names among the Roman divinities. The common traits found in Albanian, Spartan, Trojan, and Roman ways of life are proof of a common origin. The Pelasgians must have been one of the oldest human tribes, the so-called « Sons of God », nomads living in tents (p. 25). Indeed, Alb. « shim » [« shitmë »] « sell me »; « kam » « I have » « I own »; and « jap » « I give » « I pay » [the latter meaning current in the Crati dialect] coincide with the names of the tripartite division of mankind in the tribes of Sem, Cam and Japhet (p. 38). De Rada's weird etymological interpretation is very much in the Viconian spirit; the three verbs compose a semantic triangle bearing on basic property relationships.

[36] In another note on that page the author specifies that Serafina is also a Cominiate through her mother, who is herself a sister of the « Duke of Cat-

taro is seized and burnt by the Turks, then liberated by Bosdar of Arta and Vladen of Delvinë (Delvigno) at the head of an Epirote and Macedonian army (archers and slingers from Ohrid are mentioned twice). The Venetian admiral Venieri, to whom Arianites had promised his daughter, comes to fetch the bride on Venetian ships. Anmaria's story is a replica of Serafinë's (a young Albanian from Cattaro is vainly in love with Anmaria just as Bosdar is with Serafinë). But the story here has a tragic end because Anmaria's husband is Italian, i.e. twice a foreigner, ethnically and religiously [37]. Venieri takes Anmaria to Naples where he betrays her with another woman; Anmaria then is led to suicide. In « Christmas Eve », Delia, Anmaria's sister, wife of Vladen, gives her daughter Adine a lesson in genealogy by commenting on family portraits stored in her palace in Delvinë. In one of the paintings, a Sibyl is shown predicting the exile of the Pelasgians-Albanians to Italy. The setting of the third story is a monastery in Ioannina where Adine, after her mother's death, has been secluded by the Turks. There the girl makes friends with Stanisa, a noble girl from Cerigo (Cythera). « Videlaide » (*Albania* B) is the story of an Albanian girl from an unspecified city whom Masgrave, an Albanian admiral in the Sultan's service, takes to the latter's harem in Constantinople. During the voyage a Spanish girl from Granada falls in love with the Albanian hero who is, instead, attracted by Videlaide. The last canto leaves the boundaries of the Albanian world altogether while somehow relating Saracen Spain to Turkish Byzantium via Albania.

The topography in the first three cantos has a definite direction, which is from South to North-West across an area corresponding to Greater Albania: from Ioannina in Epirus to Ohrid in Macedonia to Cattaro in Montenegro, including the Aromunian Pindus — Zagori, part of the Great Vlachia, is mentioned in « Adine », while Metsovon, the Aromunian center in that zone, is described as a Pelasgian stronghold in *Serafina* B 3 [38]. The topography is fanciful in that De Rada attributes Cattaro to Arianites Comnenius who ruled over part of

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taro », Arianites. Anmaria, Arianites' daughter, comes thus to be a sister to Donikë, Scanderbeg's wife.

[37] The author's italophobia is so strong in « Anmaria » that he feels the need to excuse himself in a note: « Che io abbia poi voluto rilevare lo spirito patrio con la gelosia verso gli stranieri, prendendo a simbolo degli stessi un Italiano di Venezia, io confido che mi si perdoni... » (p. 349).

[38] « Attire buthtojm si ljeem / giagjëntërash çë me ljomadhet / ka Mecòvi çajin timpat / e Keràvnit mbrenta ree ». « [A loro] mostreremo noi soli che nasciam pure de' giganti che lanciavano il disco dal Pindo e scheggiavano i greppi del Cerauno entro le nubi » (De Rada's transl., p. 18).

Southern Albania. In so doing, however, he is again following an oral tradition. *Rapsodie* III 5 has Scanderbeg send a wedding messenger « to the palace of Arianites in Cattaro », after dismissing various proposals that he marry a princess from Italy, while Greece is ignored altogether. « I want an Albanian wife both as to language and customs », says the hero. Scanderbeg's marriage to Donikë of Cattaro symbolizes the union of Albania and Macedonia in De Rada's mind. We note, by the way, that this other case of oral tradition involving topographical confusion could not possibly occur except in the mind of an ethnic group that had little knowledge of the geography of Albania proper, a Moreote group of Macedo-Albanian origin probably [39].

We can now map *Skanderbegu*. The epic has a prologue and thirty two cantos (plus four lyrical intermezzi) divided into five books. In the prologue, dated March 1418, Bosdar Stresi sings a love song for Serafinë, daughter of Andrea Topia, prince of Arta, who has betrothed her to Nicola Dukagjini, prince of Zadrimë. The setting is Silagora in the Himarë district, where many Albanian lords have gathered to celebrate the betrothal: old Dukagjini, Nicola's father, the Duke of Dêjë (Dagno), the Bishop of Ioannina, Tafil Busa (an imaginary ancestor of the homonymous 19th century Lab hero) as well as representatives of many noble (Calabro-Albanian) families such as Strigari, Brescia, Stratigò, Frega, Barci, Braile.

Book I has eight cantos, dealing with events that occurred between April and September-October 1418. « The Departure » tells of Gibraltar, a Turkish general who, accompanied by his sister Vantisanë, sails from an unidentified place in Asia Minor and lands in Madrusë (Modrisium, a Scanderbeg stronghold, is in Lower Dibër). The next canto, « At the Seashore », tells of Bosdar's meeting Serafinë in the Himarë seashore. « The King's Confession » takes us to Krujë (Croya) where John Castrioti makes his testament in the presence of Bishop Filja. In the next canto, « Indecorousness », Viola Oderisi, a girl from Ioannina, lets herself be seduced by a Turk. « The Discord» is about a quarrel between the Venetian Duke Moroso and Milosao, the prince of Scutari, backed by Radavan, his cousin from Ioannina. The Albanian leaders include Miloshin, a folk song hero; Elia Mallisi and Marco de Mathia, derived from the oral tradition already discussed; Cola

[39] The confusion might have been induced by the fact that Arianites, after his break with Scanderbeg and his alliance with Venice, was made a Venetian « captain » in Albania. At that time Venice controlled all the ports of Albania as well the ports of Morea, Modon, Coron and Nauplia. The oral tradition in question has a Venetian conveyor.

Humoi, a hero whose first name stems from the same oral tradition while his last name comes from Barletius; as well as such representatives of Calabro-Albanian notables as Elmo, Damsi, Nuciti, Bellusci. There follows a love song which Miloshin sings for Agatë di Pravata, a Scutarene lady. Canto 6, « The Prince's Death », is an account of John Castrioti's death attended by his mother Orizia, his nephew Bosdar, and many Calabro-Albanian notables such as Rodotà, Melichia, Dara, Capparelli, Lopez. « The Battle » tells of the defeat suffered by the Albanian-Venetian allies in defending Scutari from the Turks, despite the heroism of such Albanian and Calabro-Albanian knights as Basta, De Mathia, Gropa, Marchianò, Minisci, Cadicamo [40]. In the last canto of this book, « The Disaster », the icon of the Madonna of Scutari is shown, according to tradition, leaving her shrine at the foot of the Rozafat hill to fly to Genazzano in Lazio.

Book II contains six untitled cantos covering the period 1418-20. Upon his return to Ioannina, Bishop Filja is killed by Almanzore, a Turkish leader. Canto 2 takes us to Adrianopolis, where Bosdar has gone to present Scanderbeg with his father's testament. The hero, who has « abjured the Christian faith », is in love with Frosinë, a concubine of Mahmud, the Sultan's son. In Canto 3, Miloshin and Agatë migrate to Scutari in Asia Minor (Üsküdar), united in marriage by Bishop Filja [41]. A narrative song follows in which Serafinë nostalgically remembers her love for Bosdar. The setting of Canto 4 is a Turkish prison in Scutari where many Albanian leaders are held. Gonetë, daughter of the old prince of Mirditë, falls in love with Astir, a fellow prisoner (the story of their unfortunate love appears in both *Serafina* A and *Serafina* B). Another prisoner, a young man from Gjakovë (Đakovica), paints a portrait of Gavrile, the Duchess of Dêjë, with whom he is in love (the literary sublimation of De Rada's love for Gabriella Spiriti). In Canto 5, Scanderbeg, who has reverted to the Christian faith, visits his brother Repos in Üsküdar. He learns from him of the death of their eldest brother, Staniso, poisoned by the Turks. In Canto 6, the renegade Ballaban occupies Dibër (Summer 1420) at the head of an army of Turkish adventurers accompanied by a gypsy woman. Two tightrope walkers perform in the square of the city while the gypsy sings a song whose *carpe diem* motif

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[40] Cadicamo appears in the Scutari Cadaster as a family name as well as a toponym: « villa clamada a y Cadichamj », whose chief is Radosclavo Romestina (Valentini, *Acta Albaniae veneta* 8, p. 210). Gropa, Basta, and Manësi (Manessi) are historic names—the last two are toponyms in Greece.

[41] We recall that, in Canto I, which bears the date of September 1418, Filja is pronounced dead. Canto 2 is dated November 1418.

appeals to Gavrile who watches from a window of the palace belonging to her father, the late lord of Dibër.

Book III has 7 cantos covering the period 1419-1423. Vantisanë, who has been slapped by her brother Gibraltar, leaves Scutari and runs amok after a mad dog has bitten her. She ends up in Ioannina where Bishop Filja cures her and converts her to Christianity [42]. In Canto 2, Gavrile, who has come to Ioannina to visit her uncle Filja, sings a love song in remembrance of her Gjacoviote lover, whereas Vantisanë prays God to « deliver her from the world that possessed her ». The setting of the next canto is Arta, where Bosdar kills a Turk who has attempted the honor of Olympia, a cousin of Serafinë. Astir kills the Turkish pasha in the ensuing *mêlée*. Then comes a lyric intermezzo sung by Bosdar's friends and Serafinë's girlfriends alternately. Bosdar leaves Arta to escape the Turkish wrath (Canto 4). In the next canto, Imotoe De Gjika, an Albanian girl from Veles (Turk. Köprülü), marries an Albanian from Bogdonia who becomes a Turkish agent. The young bride commits suicide after stabbing the Turkish pasha who tried to rape her. Canto 6 is an account of Astir's imprisonment told by Gonetë. Having learned that her lover must die, the girl goes crazy and throws herself into a ravine.

Book IV, which opens with a song by Serafinë, has six cantos covering the period 1439-40. Canto 1 has its setting in Himarë during St. John's holiday in June 1439. Nicola Dukagjini has come to wed his fiancée who is still in love with Bosdar [43]. The wedding is an opportunity for the Albanian princess gathered there from Northern and Southern Albania to celebrate, in the presence of the Patriarch of Venice, the « vlemia » (« vëllamja », from « vëllā » « brother », Slav. « pobratimstvo »), a sworn pledge by enemy families to end their vendettas [44]. The next canto's setting is Mount Taurus in Southern Ana-

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[42] Another anacronism. Filja is dead as of September 1418, while this canto is dated Summer 1419.

[43] After twenty-one years? We recall that Serafinë appears as fiancée to Nicola as early as March 1418 in the Prologue.

[44] The Venetian Patriarch reappears *in Serafina* C II 1, in which the same scene is reenacted, with him as a major character. The Venetian Patriarch is another Radean Byzantine touch, the Patriarchate being the supreme authority of the Byzantine Church (Nicolaus V created the Patriarchate of Venice in 1451). After Constantinople's conquest by Venice, some Venetian nobles acted as Patriarchs of Constantinople either functionally (1204-61), or nominally (1261-1524). Ohrid was the see of the Bulgarian Patriarchate from about 870 to 1018, during the first Bulgarian Empire. Basilius II, the Byzantine emperor who conquered Bulgaria in 1019, demoted the Bulgarian Patriarchate into an Archbishopric while leaving its autonomy intact. During the period of the

tolia, where a Turkish army is camping. Dara, a fellow Albanian, tells Scanderbeg the story of his son's religious aberration followed by God's punishment, death. In Canto 4, Scanderbeg triumphs over two Tartars in a joust held in Adrianopolis. In the next canto, Mahmud's mother asks the Sultan to do away with the Albanian hero who has offended his son by taking Frosinë from him. Upon discovering that she is to be devoured by a lion, Frosinë throws herself into a lake.

Book V, covering the period 1439-1440, has 5 cantos, all of which are set in Elbasan. Bishop Filja, who has moved from Ioannina to this city in Central Albania — the move conveys De Rada's further alienation from Greece — has Vantisanë read an excerpt from a hagiographic book telling of the martyrdom of St. Dorothy in Caesarea of Cappadocia in Central Anatolia. In Canto 2, Vantisanë reads a metaphysical text from « the book of the Sibyl » and has a discussion with Gavrile on the essence of the Beautiful, which is found to be the Honest. The following canto is about another piece of writing, « the apocryphal political testament of Amurat ». which has been sent to Filja, now a sick man, by Byzantine Nuns (« Monache d'Oriente »). The testament, a profession of subtle Epicureanism in « Masonic » garb, is refuted by Filja who then dies — for good this time. In Canto 4, the Gjakoviote artist comes to visit his uncle Filja just after Gavrile has left for Dêjë. The unhappy young man learns from Vantisanë that his beloved one will marry another. In the last canto Monush, a Turkish knight, breaks into Filja's house to discover Vantisanë, with whom he is in love, praying at the church's altar.

We can say that the topography of *Skanderbegu* is East-oriented. Greece is excluded from the epic's territorial comprehension, whose southernmost point is Arta in Epirus, its northernmost point Gjakovë. The choice of Elbasan, the city on the Shkumbin river, which is situated at almost equal distances from Scutari and Ioannina, the capitals of Illyria and Epirus, is determined by political considerations. Elbasan is the major Albanian city closest to Macedonia, a city which is an important station on the Via Egnatia crossing both countries from Durazzo (Alb. Durrës) to Constantinople — Via Egnatia is spel-

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Byzantine influence over the Bulgarian Church of Ohrid (1019-1186), the Bogomilian doctrine spread rapidly. The Ohrid Church was completely hellenized in the 13th century and remained a Hellenic bulwark ever since. Stephan Dušan created a Serbian Patriarchate with its see first in Žiča and then in Peć (Alb. Pejë) in 1346 (Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren* (1876), pp. 200, 211, 466; and Jireček, « Staat und Gesellschaft » in *DKWW(ph)* 56 (1912), p. 47).

led out in Serafina C I 1 [45]. The topography of *Skanderbegu* is spotted by cities distributed all along, or next to, the Via Egnatia marked by the following major stations: Durazzo, Elbasan, Ohrid, Manastir (Bitola), Vodena (Edhessa), Salonika, Cavala, Adrianopolis, Constantinople. This is a route connecting Albania, Macedonia, and the European part of Turkey while cutting out Serbia in the North and Greece in the South. *Skanderbegu's* last book (1884) reflects the political situation in the Balkans after the 1878 Berlin Treaty. That treaty left Turkey with little more than Albania and Macedonia; the rest of the peninsula had achieved independence while Croatia and Slovenia were incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian empire. The Turkish area in Europe after the Berlin Treaty wedged itself from the Bosphorus through Macedonia to the Adriatic-Ionian coast, including Herzegovina but excluding Montenegro and reaching the Golf of Arta in the South. It must be noted here that De Rada's position with respect to Albania's (and Macedonia's) relationship to Turkey, as stated in the columns of *Fiamuri Arbërit* (1883-1887) and other works at the time, is unequivocally for the territorial union of the two (three) countries [46]. The union of Albania and Turkey necessarily implies the incorporation of Macedonia, which De Rada considers an extension of Albania. « Macedonia is an Albanian country for us [Albanians] according to a continuous and persistent tradition », writes De Rada in a note to a paper read at the 12th International Congress of Orientalistics [47]. His assertion is correct; Albania and Macedonia are indeed equivalent terms in the writings of such humanistic authors as Silvius Aeneas Piccolomini (Pius II), Johannes J. Pontanus, Raphael Volaterranus *et al.* [48]. Certainly the Albanian poet knew that Scanderbeg's

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[45] Elbasan is also the site of St. Vladimir's Cloister, named after Joannes Vladimir, the prince of Zeta (Montenegro) who was buried in that cloister after being murdered (1051) by his brother-in-law, Joannes Vladoslav, the last Bulgarian tsar who had Ohrid as his capital (Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren*, p. 197).

[46] In an editorial in the 9 (1884) issue of *Fiamuri Arbërit*, while deploring the Berlin Treaty's mutilation of Albania in favor of Montenegro, De Rada writes: « Really we don't see how Albania could safely exist except within the matrix of the Turkish Empire to which destiny has united her ».

[47] *Caratteri*, p. 12. In this paper the author once more explains Aleksandër>Leksandër as a compound of « liks » (« ligsht ») « bad » and « andër » « dream »; Emathia, a Macedonian region, is found to be the same as Alb. « e-madhia » « the great one »; Odysseus comes from Alb. « udhë » ὡδός « road »; « entelechia » meaning « innate » » « la nata dentro », the name the Macedonian [= Albanian] Aristotle » gave the soul, is a derivation of Alb. « lehja » « birth » prefixed by « ndë » (« ëndë ») « in ».

[48] Noli, *George Castrioti* (1947), pp. 128, 148, 152.

mother, Voisava, came from Polog (actual Tetovo) in Macedonia [49]. Born of an Albanian father and Macedonian mother, Scanderbeg was to De Rada an Alexander *redivivus* [50], similar to the Great Macedonian also in that he never returned home. Whether in Adrianopolis (II 2; IV 4), Üsküdar (II 5), or Anatolia (IV 3), Scanderbeg is really cut off from Albanian history, and the closest he comes to it is when he sends Serafinë a necklace of pearls as a wedding present (IV 2). Thus, the poem bearing Scanderbeg's name as the real « flag of Albania » (« fiamuri Arbërit »), ends with the Albanian national hero never having set foot on Albanian soil. Clearly the hero is another hypostasis of the poet himself in exile.

The epic's fifth book, in particular, has nothing to do with its nominal hero, the real hero being the author himself, here no longer a poet but a priest. The topography suggests a mental pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Canto 1 takes us to Caesarea of Cappadocia, a city with a flourishing Greek Christian colony at the time of the religious persecution by Diocletian. In a note following that canto, De Rada expresses his « doubt whether Caesarea was inhabited by real Greeks or rather Macedonians », the implication being that St. Dorothy could well be Macedo-Albanian. In Canto 3, Greek Orthodox nuns in Constantinople send Bishop Filja Amurat's apocryphal testament. Are these nuns Macedo-Albanian too? In Canto II 2, Miloshin and Agatë leave Scutari wich has fallen to the Turks to emigrate to Turkish Scutari in front of Constantinople. Emigrants usually join their fellow nationals in exile — is De Rada suggesting that the two Scutaris are ethnically related? His fantastic etymologies, on the one hand, and his equally fantastic manipulations of history and geography, on the other, are such that we should no longer be surprised at the most incongruent associations on his part. Let us recall that, in *Antichità*, he maintains a certain kinship between Albanians and Trojans, and Üsküdar is not far from Troy. And we have seen — and shall see more — that his identification patterns are almost

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[49] According to Barletius (Preface), Voisava's father was the prince of the Triballi (« Triballorum princeps »), a Thraco-Illyrian tribe in Moesia (Serbia-Bulgaria) — a « civitas Triballiae » is on record in Roman imperial times. In a narrative on Scanderbeg by Giuseppe de Rada, the poet's son, Voisava is said to be « the daughter of the Prince of Macedonia and Bulgaria » (Giuseppe de Rada, *Opere*, 1969, p. 232). According to classical writers (Strabo, Plinius), the Triballi inhabited the region between Morava and Iskar and were neighbors to the Dardanians.

[50] Alexander the Great's mother, Olympia, was the daughter of Molossus, king of Epirus—Albania was called Epirus as well as Macedonia by humanistic and post-Renaissance writers.

child-like. Here is an example which is supposed to be an exemplum. Canto IV 3 is about Dara's son, Michele, who has disobeyed God's commandments by indulging in sinful sensual pleasures. That story is the faithful account of the death of De Rada's own son, Michelangelo, including a dream recorded on a notebook [51]. Dara dies after telling the story to Scanderbeg, who decides to cut all ties with the infidel and return to Albania to fight for Christ and the country. « In that moment the sound of a bell announcing matins came from a monastery situated on a rock underneath ». Here Scanderbeg is camping on Mount Taurus in Southern Anatolia, almost on the border with Syria. The location is significant of the hero's spiritual regeneration while the detail of the bell reminds one of the conversion of the Innominato in the *Promessi sposi*. We have the topos of the Damascus road conversion: Scanderbeg's conversion adumbrates De Rada's own conversion, i.e. his complete dedication to religious teaching and preaching, entailing his death as a poet.

Our excursion into *Skanderbegu's* topography leads to the conclusion that De Rada's eastward drive has Jerusalem as its terminal. The journey seems to follow in the wake of St. Jerome's pilgrimage from Aquileia to Bethlehem via Illyria, Thrace, Anatolia and Syria. De Rada's pilgrimage has seven major stages: Macchia first, then Scutari and later Ioannina. Bogdonia, suggesting Macedonia by virtue of rhyme, follows, with Constantinople, or Scutari in Asia Minor, as a fifth station. The sixth is a locality in Anatolia on the road to Damascus leading to the Holy Land. The first part of the pilgrimage, from Macchia to Costantinople (Books I-IV), is something of a crusade while the second part, from Constantinople to Jerusalem (Book V), is purely spiritual. In other words, the topography represents both the worldly and otherworldly dimensions of the Christian epic, present in its very title, « Skanderbegu i pafaan ». The phrase comes from *Raps.* II 17, in which Scanderbeg's death is described like Christ's death in the apocalyptical tradition: an earthquake occurs while « the unfortunate Scanderbeg entered the opened skies ». A loser in this life, the hero has his apotheosis in heaven. The association of Constantinople with Jerusalem reflects the variance between De Rada's Byzantine faith and Roman Catholicism while the Durazzo-Constantinople axis points to his cherished idea of an Albanian-Macedonian union within the framework of a Turkey considered as Byzantium's heir.

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[51] The page, dated 27 August 1875, is found in a family account book—in Biblioteca Civica, Cosenza, A' (1-23). *Skanderbegu* IV containing that episode was published in 1877.

Greece is conspicuously absent from this picture for good reason: De Rada's Albanian-Macedonian union is his reply to Pan-Hellenism. In *Antichità* (p. 23) we read: « The opposition between the two nations [Albania and Greece] fomented by the ridiculous claims of Pan-Hellenism obstructs the course of the Greek government and neutralizes its action towards better governance ». Greek chauvinism in steady rise during the second half of the 19th century alienated the poet from Greece and made him lean towards Turkey as the bulwark for Albania's existence. The shift was especially hard for one like him who wanted to remain faithful to his family traditions and Arbëresh history in general. An outline of the latter is called for at this point.

5. *Italo-Albanians and Greco-Italo-Albanians.*

The Albanians started their migration to Italy from the mother country earlier than from Epirus and the Morea [52]. According to Mugnos, Giovanni Matranga, a scion of a noble family from Myzeqe (Musachia) [53], offered his military services to King Martin of Sicily, who rewarded him with the fief of Morgana near Calascibetta. Mugnos, who dedicates a chapter of his *Teatro genealogico* to the Matranga family, says that in 1391 Matranga married a Sicilian noble woman from that town, who bore him two sons, one of whom, Giacomo, purchased the fief of Mantica [54]. Since King Martin reigned from 1399 to 1409 — Mugnos is known to be a not very accurate writer — we can situate the first migration to Italy at the beginning of the 15th century.

We know little more about another, most likely, Epirote captain. Demetrius Reres, with his two sons George and Basilius, helped King Alfonso of Aragon subdue a Calabrian revolt fomented by the Ange-

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[52] Albanian refugees to Ragusa and Venicè are on record as early as 1338, immediately following the first Turkish invasion of Albania (Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi* (1925) p. 80). Citizens from Durazzo migrated to Apulia in 1393 (*Acta et diplomata* II, No. 506, quoted by Šufflay, « Städte und Burgen » in *DAWW(ph)* 63 (1924), p. 43). Albanian refugees in Recanati are on record in 1437, in Venice in 1444 (Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi,* p. 80). Ancona's constitution had a clause denying hospitality to Albanian refugees because of their « malignancy » and crudelty: « Quoniam Albanenses viri sanguninei sunt et malignantis omnes, a quibus tamquam a furiosis gladiis abfugendum est » (quoted in Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi,* p. 78).

[53] « Homines Matarangi de Caravastassi » (Karavasta is a marsh in Muzeqe) appears in a document of 1298 (*Acta et diplomata* I, p. 528).

[54] Mugnos, *Teatro genealogico* 2, pp. 201-3.

vins in 1448. The king appointed Demetrius governor of the Reggio province in Calabria while George was given the task of superintending Sicily against a French invasion [55]. It was most likely the soldiers of George Reres who, after having lived for short periods in various places [56], settled in Bisir by Mazzara. After a couple of years, they moved from there to Contessa Entellina, a village in the Agrigento region, as attested by Italian historians [57], while the Reres family

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[55] We learn this from a royal diploma of 1 September 1448 in which Reres is said to be related to the « illustrious Castrioti family ». The Castrioti family became illustrious through Scanderbeg who in 1488 was unknown in Italy. And there is no mention of a Reres as a Castriota relative in the documents of the time. The very name Reres is absent from the documents, and the name is a riddle. Renes, or Renessi, a family name recurring in Venetian documents of the 15th and 16th centuries concerning the stratiotes, seems to be the same as *Shqip* Renës (Rrenës), a name which is found in the Scutari Cadaster both as a family name and as toponym: « Villa clamada Renesi a presso a Piera Negra » (Valentini, *Acta Albaniae veneta* 8, p. 289). Piera Negra (today Gur'i-zí) is said to be a village close to Rrênc (> Renës » (from Gheg « rânë » Tosk « rërë » « sand »?) Three toponyms very similar to the name in question occur in Albania: Rerës (Fier, Berat), Rerëz (Selenica?), and Rrerëzë (Tepelenë, Gjirokastër) — see *A Gazetteer of Albania* (1946). The historians are silent about the enigmatic Reres. An exception is Thallóczy, who has advanced the hypothesis that Demetrius Reres could be Demetrius Paleologus, the Emperor's brother (*Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen*: « Die Albanische Diaspora », p. 335). But would a Paleologus renounce a name far more illustrious than Castriota's in an official document? The next question is whether the document is official at all. The summary (« transunto ») of this royal diploma was first produced by the notary Diego Barretta on 24 September 1665 in Palermo (G. Schirò, *Gli Albanesi* (1904) p. 199). Just at that time a legal controversy was going on concerning the Basilian Monastery in Mezzojuso. This monastery, the oldest Arbëresh institution, and which has an important place in the history of the Arbëresh cult and culture, was founded in 1609 by Andrea Reres, a descendant of Demetrius Reres, with the proviso that the monks would officiate in the Greek rite. Since no Basilian Albanian monks existed at the time, they had to be imported. N. Borgia (*I monaci Basiliani* 2, (1942), p. 28) specifies that eight monks came from Candia (Crete) in 1630. They were soon accused by Italian prelates and priests of being false monks, even imposters and schismatics (Rodotà, *Dell'origine* 2, 1760, p. 208). A bitter fight ensued which lasted for decades, until the Holy See took action by putting the monastery under the direction of an Italian Basilian General (1664). The executors of the Reres testament protested in court, which ruled against them (1668). Such being the case, one can doubt the authenticity of a transcript dated 1665, which seems to have been produced with the obvious intent of bestowing prestige on the Reres family, thus helping the latter to win the then raging battle.

[56] According to Rodotà (*Dell'origine* 3, p. 103), some stayed in Taormina, in a place which was named after them, « quartiere degli Albanesi ».

[57] Fazzello, *De rebus siculis*, Dec. I, Lib. X, p. 233; Pirri, *Sicilia sacra* II, p. 843.

settled at Mezzojuso, an abandoned Arabian foundation (Menzel Jusuf, Joseph's castle).

The Albanians held about a third of the Peloponnesus when it was occupied by the Turks (1460). Subsequently, many Greeks left their country. About the same time some Greco-Albanians must have emigrated to Sicily where Albanian settlements already existed [58]. In the capitulation of Contessa Entellina, dated 18 september 1521, « Greeks who came from the island of Andros » are mentioned, most of them Albanians, according to their names (Lopis, Petta, Lala, Curbi, Musacchi et al [59]. Palazzo Adriano, which has the oldest capitulation in Sicily (1482), seems to have been populated by Albanian Moreotes likewise [60]. And while the majority of the Albanian exiles after Scanderbeg's death flocked to Calabria, some of them may have moved to Sicily.

The Red Book of the City of Lecce (« Il Libro Rosso della Città di Lecce ») mentions that Albanians living there in 1463 were deprived of their privileges following crimes perpetrated by them [61]. These Albanians must have been soldiers of Scanderbeg who chose to remain in Italy after his successful 1461 expedition to help King Ferdinand against the South-Italian rebellious lords [62]. After Scanderbeg's death, in the general panic before the imminent invasion, many Albanians, most of them soldiers of Scanderbeg and his allied Albanian princes, crossed the Adriatic and landed in Molise (the capitulations of Santa Croce in Magliano are of 1470). According to tradition, the settlements on the right bank of the Crati river (S. Sofia, S. Demetrio, Macchia. S. Cosmo, S. Giorgio, Vaccarizzo) belong to the same time (1467-1471) [63]. There followed closely afterwards (and perhaps some prece-

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[58] Some of them joined Calabrian settlements. Thallóczy (*Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen*, « Die Albanische Diaspora », p. 336) reports an emigration from Constantinople under the leadership of Alessio Comite. These Greeks settled in Firmo in 1449, and Comite exercised feudal jurisdiction there—he was made a baron.

[59] G. Schirò, *Canti tradizionali* (1923), p. XIII.

[60] G. La Mantia, *I capitoli delle colonie* (1904), p. XIII.

[61] P. Coco, *Casali albanesi* (1921), p. 20.

[62] One of the privileges was the right to carry arms, a right they must have misused, if the city government reacted by abolishing their privileges.

[63] The date of S. Demetrio's capitulation, 1471, seems to be the ground for that tradition. But because the capitulation was signed in the period immediately following Scanderbeg's death, it does not follow that the signataries were Scanderbeg people. Their names: Malakasi, Bresha, Lopësi, point to an Epirote provenance. Zangari reports the most common family names in Macchia: Alfano, Archiopulo, Belluscio, Brunetto, Cagnazzo, Chiurco, Clivezzo, D'Avati, Di

ded) the settlements in the Otranto district and those in the Potenza region. Krujë (Croya) fell in 1477, Scutari, the year after. Another wave of emigration began which brought into existence the villages situated on the Appenine range. At about the same time were founded or populated the settlements in the Pollino range and those in Basilicata. In 1448 Chimara rose under the leadership of Scanderbeg's son, John Castrioti, and many more Albanians left after the unsuccessful insurrection. According to another — dubious — tradition, Piana dei Greci was founded at that time at the foot of the Pizzuta mountain not far from Palermo.

The Albanian exiles of the Scanderbeg period were mostly warriors who knew how to tend herds but were not particularly fond of tilling the soil, something which the Neapolitan government wanted them to do after giving them asylum. Those of their leaders who chose Naples or Palermo as residence were given privileges usually bestowed on nobles at the time, and merged with the Italian nobility, while those of their leaders who chose to share a common destiny with their people became part of them. After years of unruly existence in feudal Southern Italy, the Albanians had, in order to survive, to give up their dreams of returning home and reluctantly acknowledge the situation. They had to learn how to eke out a meager living by putting their shoulders to the wheel like the natives whom they had despised for accepting servitude. In the long run, however, they had to swallow their pride and come to terms with the various feudal lords — they preferred the ecclesiastic to the lay, convinced that « a vassal of the Chúrch is worthier than a vassal of a prince » — [64] and signed the capitulations without, however, signing away their right to protest, or at times to shoot, if they felt they were being abused [65]. This was the situation when the Coroneans arrived.

Noce, Di Pace, Dramés, Ligori, Longo, Maimone, Manesi, Marchianò, Marino, Masi, Mastranga, Ponte, Rada, Rebecco, Zara.

[64] Mugnos, *Teatro genealogico* 2, p. 204.

[65] Mugnos (p. 203) mentions — providing no date — the murder of Giacomo d'India, an officer of the Archbishop of Monreale, by the inhabitants of Piana « who were not used to the Sicilian yoke ». Tajani (*Istorie albanesi* 4, (1886), p. 6) refers to a letter by the Calabrian Saint Francis of Paola, in which he tells of an attack by five Albanians — who must have been, considering the date, 1446-48, followers of Demetrius Reres — made against people carrying food to the Franciscan monastery where the saint lived. The Albanians of the « Greek Sila » are on record for committing robberies and cutting fruit trees in the Acri region in a document of 1492 (F. Capalbo, *Di alcune colonie* (1919), pp. 7-8). A royal decree, following a request made by a meeting of barons in Naples (3 June 1506), forbids the Albanians to live in hamlets without walls, keep horses or mules,

In 1500, Coron, a longtime Venetian stronghold in the Peloponnesus, fell to Turks who had at about that time completed the conquest of the greater part of the Balkan peninsula. In 1516, the Kingdom of Naples passed to Charles V, King of Spain, who was crowned Emperor of Germany soon afterwards. In 1532, the imperial navy captured Coron with the active help of the city's inhabitans. But the Spanish governor, Girolamo Mendoza, could not hold the seaport for long. Before abandoning it, however, he obtained from the Emperor an assurance that the Coronean notables, threatened with annihilation, would be shipped to Calabria and Apulia. The same policy was practiced by Venice with respect to the stratiotes from Nauplia, Corinth and other Greek localities, transferring them to Venice and various Venetian possessions in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. According to contemporary historical sources, 200 ships were employed in carrying these Moreotes to Southern Italy. The figure seems exaggerated, but there can be no doubt that this was a wave of emigration comparable in size to the one following Scanderbeg's death. A letter of the Emperor to the Italian viceroy, Marquis of Villafranca (8 April 1553), instructs him to provide the Coronean « caballeros » with land in Apulia and Calabria, while exempting them from all taxes and granting them pecuniary aid from the public treasury (70 ducats per year)[66].

Charles V was generous with the Coronean exiles because they provided excellent soldiers and officers for his imperial army[67]. Some

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bear weapons (Tajani, *Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 19). A 1564 decree by the Neapolitan Vice-roy threatens a penalty of five years in jail for Albanians carrying arms and riding horses with saddle, bridle and spurs (Capalbo, *op. cit.*, p. 8). In 1688, shootings occurred between the Macchia peasants and retainers of their lord, D. Indaco Siscara, the Commendator of Sant'Adriano. Soon after a Siscara man was killed. In 1690 the captain defending the lord's interest was murdered (Capalbo, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

[66] The Spanish text of the letter is given by Masci, *Sull'origine* (1808), note p. 74.

[67] Masci (*ibid.*, p. 75) makes the points that « the only profession suited to the Albanians is the military ». Indeed, some of the celebrated captains of the times were Albanians. Constantine Arianites, Scanderbeg's brother-in-law (buried in the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Rome) and Ferrante Castriota, Scanderbeg's grandson, distinguished themselves in battle. Nicola Masi (Masci) from Nauplia organized a squadron of light cavalry, the « cappelletti », which became a model to imitate. Mercurio Bua (« il Magnifico Conte Mercurio Bua ») from the Morea, is the hero of an epic by Tzanes Koronaios, « Bua Andragathémata » (in Sathas' *Hellenika anekdota* 1). The Basta family achieved European fame through the brothers, or cousins, Nicolas and George. Pierre Bayle, who devotes to them an entry in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique,* mentions George

of the Coroneans reached a special status as members of the royal guard and consequently adopted the customs of the Spanish ruling class [68]. Not all the Coroneans, however, came from Coron, many came from other Morean seaports such as Modon and Patras. Nor were they all Albanians. Both Tajani and Dorsa list as Coroneans the following families: Archiopoli, Siropoli [69], Altimati, D'Amato, Cukisi, Grimolizzi, Mazzucca, Pancrazio, Prete (del Prete), Rodotà, Spanò, Stratigò, Traggina [70], while Dorsa lists separately five other families, Virga, Tocci, Marchianò, Rada, Schirò, adding that the nobility of these families goes back to the 16th century.

The arrival of the Coroneans changed the picture of the Albanian extraction in three respects: ethnic, religious, and social.

The relative ethnic homogeneity of the former exiles was modified by the Moreotes some of whom were Greeks. Having had a long commerce with the Greeks and Venetians and been exposed to these cul-

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Basta not only as a « famous general », but also as a « highly esteemed author » for his two works, *Maestro di campo generale* (Venice, 1606) and *Governo di cavalleria leggiera* (Frankfurt, 1612), which establish him as an authority on the art of cavalry warfare.

[68] Some of these aristocrats settled in S. Demetrio, giving the village the epithet of « Corone » in later times.

[69] Siropoli is not listed in Dorsa's *Sugli albanesi* (1847). According to A. Zavarroni, *Historia erectionis* (1750), the Rodotà family emigrated from the Morea towards 1550, i.e. many years after the Coronean emigration.

[70] Tajani, *Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 48; Dorsa, *Sugli albanesi,* p. 74. — Stratigò « general ») is a name derived from a title. The Spani was a noble North-Albanian family in Scanderbeg's time and the name is still heard today. Cukisi (Kuqësi) is clearly Albanian, and perhaps also Traggina (Dragina is a family name in Barile). Prete is the Italian translation of Alb. Prifti (« priest »), while Grimolizzi (*-ica* is a Slavic suffix) can be another albanized Slavic name—a Cremolissi (Cormulissi) appears in a Venetian document of 1324 (Valentini, *Acta Albaniae veneta* 1, p. 13). Mazzucca (Bulg. « mačuka » Rum. « măciuča » « club ») seems Aromunian — a village, Maciuchi, is in the Pindus range (Capidan, *Les Macédo-Roumains* (1937) p. 13 — the name appears in Venetian documents about stratiotes). Sathas (*Documents inédits* 4, pp. XLV-XLI) lists as Albanian the following families (transcribed here in standard Albanian and ordered alphabetically): Bali, Ballu, Balmi, Basta, Belësi, Belushi, Burmazi [Burrmadhi], Buza, Buzi, Çarësi, Çuka, Çuni, Dara, Floka, Golemi, Greka, Gropa, Gjerbësi, Hekali, Helmi, Kabashi, Kaçimali, Kallogjeri, Kriekuqi, Kucumadhi, Lamu, Lalioti, Lashta, Lata, Lezi, Lëkurësi, Lopësi, Loti, Lumi, Luzi, Margjeli, Manësi, Markësi, Matranga, Mazëreku, Mazi, Meliqi, Murtati, Mushka, Muzaka, Peci, Peta, Pleshi, Radu, Renësi, Ruci, Ralli, Skura, Suli, Sulu, Spata, Thana, Toskësi, Tuba, Vrana, Vuci, Xhonga, Zeza. Names of families listed by Sathas as Albanians but not having an Albanian ring have been omitted, which is, of course, not a sufficient reason for denying Albanian ethnicity, since many Greco-Albanian families have Greek names.

tures, their frame of mind was somewhat different from that of the Albanians from the mother country. Greek was their second language, which they kept as the language of liturgy, thus giving it a lasting and secure shelter in their churches. It was the Moreotes who organized the Byzantine churches in Italy to which they came led by a bishop [71]. In 1547, San Nicola dei Greci was built in Palermo [72]. In 1553, the Metropolitan of Coron, Pafnutius, visited the Albanian villages in the Otranto district, founded parishes and ordained priests there [73]. The Holy See did not react. In concert with the Catholic powers of Europe, the Holy See had been practicing, under Turkish pressure (Vienna was besieged by the Turks in 1529), a conciliatory policy towards the Eastern Church [74]. In 1521, Leo X issued a bull intended to curb the zeal of Catholic missionaries in the Venetian possessions in the East to convert the inhabitans to the Roman rite. In 1536 Paul III confirmed the previous bull. Then, in an encyclical of the same year, he instructed the Italian prelates to respect the religious feelings of the Coroneans, whom he commended for their faith and patriotism, and let them exercise their rite in Catholic churches, if they did not have their own churches. The encyclical is evidence that the Coroneans began to organize the Byzantine church in Italy as soon as they arrived. The question of rite which permeates the whole history of the Arbëresh, and which arose only with their arrival, soon became a matter of controversy. Conscious of the historical importance of the Grek rite, the Coroneans championed its cause with determination and persistence, often defying the power of the Italian prelates with whom they continually clashed. At the same time they championed Albanian ethnicity, aware that the majority (but not the totality or quasi-totality, as the Coronean writers and their followers have always claimed) of the Albanians were Greek Orthodox. The organic alliance of the Albanian language and the Greek rite proved in the long run to be fateful for the survival of the Arbëresh as an ethno-religious minority group.

By assuming the leadership of the Albanian extraction in Italy which, poor ignorant and demoralized by feudal impositions, had been moving towards extinction, the Coroneans revitalized that extrac-

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[71] Gatti & Korolevskij, *Il rito bizantino* (1942), p. 503.

[72] It was built by an Albanian, Andrea Scarmiglia, and a « Coronean », Matteo Manczo, according to the parish archives of that church (M. Sciambra, *Indagini storiche* (1936), p. 17).

[73] P. Coco, *Casali albanesi*, p. 28.

[74] Leo X (1513-22), Paul II (1534-50), Julius III (1550-55) were all friendly to the Eastern Church (Gatti & Korolevskij, *Il rito bizantino*, p. 505).

tion, brought together its dispersed members and inculcated in them a sense of community, a feeling of pride that fanned the die-hard Albanian instinct for power and war. Masci reports a significant fact [75]. According to an official letter referring to the 1569 census, thirty villages in Upper Calabria did not pay the tax of 11 carlini per home which the rest of the Albanian villages and hamlets (a total of 68) did. Considering that the Coroneans had been exempted from taxes repeatedly (Charles V in 1534, Philip III in 1620, Philip IV in 1672) [76], Masci draws the right conclusion that the thirty localities in question were counted as Coronean [77]. This is to say that the Coronean nobles had managed, in less than a generation, to have the Albanian peasants of Upper Calabria, most of them belonging to the older wave of emigration, identify with them nominally, while in practice accepting their hegemony. The latter was, of course, the result of their economic, cultural and social superiority. Unlike the former exiles who landed in Italy with a knife in their belts as their only treasure, the Coroneans carried with them many precious possessions [78]. Their leaders were exempted from taxes and various privileges were bestowed upon them by both the Emperor and the Pope. Some of them held high offices and many became rich. Tajani's judgment on the class division caused by the various concessions made to the Coroneans is correct: « These distinctions laid the ground for reconstituting in Italy the Albanian aristocracy, especially since the Coroneans, having access to power, cultivated the prestige of their titles, thus giving rise to an opposition between them and the rest of their fellow Albanians who had suffered more than they, landing in Italy without protection and devoid of assistance... » [79].

These aristocrats imposed on the rest of the Arbëresh population their values and habits, and controlled for a long time the spiritual and political life of the community. They founded churches and cultural institutions destined to educate spiritual and lay leaders under their direction, they were the representatives of the Arbëresh cult and culture [80]. They also cultivated the language and collected the folk-

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[75] Masci, *Sull'origine,* note p. 73.

[76] Tajani, *Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 47.

[77] The Coroneans settled in various parts of the Kingdom, including Sicily, but their strength was, and has been ever since, concentrated in Upper Calabria.

[78] *Raps.* III 25 mentions a Lord Andrea who leads a convoy of three ships with Albanian exiles « westward to Italy », thus implying that their provenance was Greece. *Milosao* 15 tells of a Hydriote woman who carries her precious blankets on board of a ship bound for Calabria.

[79] Tajani, *Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 48.

[80] Coroneans or nobles of some sort are the major poets and writers: Bi-

lore, while using selective criteria that reflected their class and caste consciousness. Arbëresh literature is heraldic to a great extent, and the aristocratic spirit is conspicuous in oral poetry, a typical case of *gesunkenes Kulturgut*. An ethnolinguistic survey of *Rapsodie* will make this clear, while at the same time exhibiting the various layers of civilization and culture, some of them quite primitive, coexisting in it.

6. *Ethnolinguistic Survey of Calabro-Albanian Oral Poetry.*

Rapsodie has a geographic background that can be roughly divided into three parts. One is a zone composed of Northern Albania and part of present day Montenegro, from Cattaro (III 5) to Krujë (ibid.), including Dukagjin (III 17), the Drin valley (Dêjë, II 13), and Mirditë (III 23). Another zone encompasses a Macedonian-Thessalian stretch from Ohrid (II 20) to Rendina (II 6), including Salonika (III 27). A third zone is the Morea, more precisely the Venetian possessions there, the ports of Coron Κορώνη (III 16; III 23), Modon Μεθόνη (III 20), and Nauplia Ναύπλιον (III 20). This geographical area corresponds to various phases of the Albanian expansion in the southwestern part of Thessaly in Stephan Dušan's time, down to the Albanian colonization of the Morea in the 15th century. Epirus is absent from this picture, which includes Montenegro instead. The presence of Montenegro, represented by Cattaro, seems mediated by Venice which controlled the whole Adriatic-Ionian coast, including Cattaro, at the time in which the Moreote cycle originated. We saw that the Tocci recorded tradition has Venetian ships carrying Albanians to Italy from Montenegro, and the presence of the latter in *Rapsodie* is probably due to the same source. The reason for the absence of Epirus in *Rapsodie* seems elusive at first sight. The Albanian Epirotes fought against the Turks just as the Albanian Moreotes did, though not at the same time. Chimara rose after Scanderbeg's death under the leadership of his son, an event that has no echo in *Rapsodie*, where John Castrioti appears only as an orphan going into exile (III 14). The Scanderbeg cycle which ends with the hero's death and his son's exile records deeds focusing on Scanderbeg, to the exclusion of leaders who were not his allies or friends. The most influential leader of Southern Alba-

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dera, De Rada, Dara, Schirò; the scholars: Avati, Baffa, Basta, Bellusci (Domenico, Michele), Crispi, Dorsa, Guzzetta, Jeno, Masci, Marchianò (Michele, Stanislao), Petrotta, Rodotà, Schirò (Paolo).

nia and part of Epirus, Arianites Comnenius, Scanderbeg's father-in-law, was his ally and friend only for a short time. After the battle of Berat, Arianites abandoned the Albanian League, dealing with Naples and Venice independently until his death (1461). This may be the reason why Arianites, who was honored with the papal appellative *athleta Christi* for his resistance to the Turks before Scanderbeg entered the scene [81], is mentioned only once in *Rapsodie* and, strangely enough, not as a lord of Central-Southern Albania, which he was, but of Montenegro, which he was not. His absence from the Scanderbeg cycle seems to be due to his defection from the Scanderbeg-led Albanian League at a time when Albania's survival was at stake. Indeed the appearance of the Albanian princes in *Rapsodie* seems to obey a definite criterion: only the hero's real friends, those faithful to him until death, have a name in the nation's oral epos. It is no accident that Lekë Dukagjini has a prominent role in *Rapsodie*, second only to Scanderbeg, functioning as legatee after his death (III 17): the Dukagjinis, who were sometimes at variance with Scanderbeg, stood by him to the bitter end [82].

About the same time that the Albanians in the mother country were holding back the Turks, the Albanian Moreotes were fighting hard against both Byzantines and Turks. The Albanians first set foot in the Morea (Veligosti, Karytaena) in 1349 as soldiers in the service of Manuel Kantakuzenos, the Despot of Misisthra (Misthra) [83]. During the reign of Theodorus Paleologus (1384-1407), 10,000 Albanian colonists settled around Leondari by Megalopolis and Tabia by Tripolis [84]. Nerio Acciajuóli lured crowds of Albanians to populate his deserted lands in Korinthia. Half of the Morea was albanized, according to Phrantzes, a 15th century Byzantine historian [85]. The Albanian Moreotes opposed a bitter resistance to the Turks, championing the Greek cause against the infidel. They were beaten and severely punished repeatedly in 1397, 1423, 1446 and 1452 [86]. In 1454, the Albanian peasants of Arcadia and Laconia, under the leadership of Peter Bua the Lame, rose against the Despot of Misisthra [87]. *Raps.* I 4 mentions

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[81] A. Gegaj, *L'Albanie* (1937), p. 53.

[82] After the Turkish conquest of Albania, many Dukagjinis emigrated to Italy. Several of them have their tombs in Naples (Gegaj, *ibid.* p. 16).

[83] A. Philippson, « Zur Ethnographie des Peloponnes » in *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* 36 (1890), p. 7.

[84] Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* (1854), pp. 319.

[85] Philippson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] G. Finlay, *The History of Greece under Ottoman and Venetian Domination* (1856), note p. 73.

a Pjetër Shtrori, lord of a mountainous zone (« maljet e Pjetër Shtrorit »): *Male*vos is the name of three high mountains in the Morea, including the Artemision mountains in Arcadia — [88] the toponym Artemisia appears in De Rada's manuscript « Collezione di poesie albanesi », Canto 35 [89]. In the same rhapsody where Pjetër Shtrori is mentioned, « the daughter of Misisthrates » (« e bilja e Misistratit ») appears. The despot of Misisthra had to rely on Turkish assistance to put down the Albanian insurrection. Greeks and Albanians subsequently joined to resist the Turkish invasion until Misthra was occupied (1460). In 1463, Albanians and Greeks and Venetians joined together in a last vain effort. By that time the number of Albanians in the Peloponnesus had risen to about 200,000, half of its population, according to Philippson (about 90,000, 12 % of the population, in 1879) [90].

We can then speak of two distinct cycles in *Rapsodie*, one centering on Scanderbeg and the battles he and his fellows fought against the Turks, and the other lacking a focal point and bearing on the battles the Albanian Moreotes fought against both Byzantines and Turks. The heroes in the first cycle are usually historical persons: Scanderbeg, Amurat, Lekë Dukagjini, Lekë Zaharia, Ballaban Badera, Donikë Castrioti. The heroes in the other cycle are either legendary figures adumbrating historical persons, such as Pjetër Shtrori, Pjetër-Shini, Dedë Skura, Pal Golemi, Nik Peta, Gjon Bardhela, or figures expressive of collectivity as a whole in the very sense of Vico's *universale fantastico*, such as Milo-Shini, Rada-Vani, Constantine, the son of Fuha, Lord Andrea (« Zoti Ndre »), Lady Helen (« Zonja Lenë »), Arminò, the sister of Scanderbeg. The fact that in some songs the heroes are both historical and legendary is an indication that the Moreote cycle has been superimposed on the Scanderbeg cycle. *Raps.* II 20 has Scanderbeg and Miloshin « share a meal like brothers » « in front of Ohrid », while a variant brings together Miloshin and Constantine [91]. In *Raps.* II 18, Amurat sets free the sister of Scanderbeg captured by Arminò somewhere on the coast — most likely a

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[88] Philippson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[89] G. Ferrari, *Canti albanesi,* p. 62.

[90] Philippson (pp. 33-34 of « Zur Ethnographie des Peloponnes ») describes the Albanian population according to township, district and department—specifying the name of the Albanian-speaking villages in areas with mixed languages: Argolis and Korinthia, including Hydra, Spetsa, Poros: 68,280; Achaia and Elis: 4,493; Arcadia: 922; Laconia: 8,588; Messinia: 7,970. Total: 90,253, 12.3 % of the entire population.

[91] Ferrari, *Canti albanesi,* p. 35. — Milutin and Costantine appear as « brothers » and « emperors » in a Bulgarian folk song.

Morean seaport, judging from the detail of the « seven hundred galleys » in that rhapsody. The *contaminatio* of the two cycles has Coronean authorship. The civilization of the Albanian Moreotes was rather primitive, like that of their fellow Albanians in the mother country. They remained peasants and shepherds, content to till the soil and tend herds; they kept away from cities and seaports populated by Greeks. The presence in *Rapsodie*, as well as in the Chieuti Codex, of Morean seaports reveals a learned touch. Because of the contact with Venice, these seaports had an advanced civilization. Consequently, once in Italy, the noble Moreotes could easily adopt the life style of the Spanish rulers and their Calabrian and Neapolitan vassals. And when, in later times, they started collecting the Arbëresh oral poetry, they added touches betraying their aristocratic preferences. The well-known song of « Morea, the beautiful » (*Raps.* III 19) includes such forms of address as « zoti tatë » « lord father » and « zonja mëmë » « lady mother », characteristic of aristocratic family usage. Such formulae, which are found in many songs of *Rapsodie*: I 14; I 17; II 4; « Wedding Song »; III 12; III 27, exhibit a Coronean stamp. The old ballad of « Constantine the Younger » (II 16) includes a line, « ku vete ti, tat loshi »? « where are you going, old father »? The common and plain formula « tat loshi » in that ballad identifies it as authentic: *losh* is a kin-term in several Arvanitika dialects (corresponding to the generalized *barba* of Venetian derivation)[92], while the expression « tata-losh » « old man » is still used in Scutari where an apparently parallel expression, « babë loci » is heard more frequently.

We can say in conclusion that the Scanderbeg cycle is the oral record of the Albanian resistance in Northern Albania, a zone including Dukagjin, Mirditë, Mat and Dibër, but excluding Scutari and Durazzo, the two main Albanian cities then under Venetian dominion. The Scanderbeg cycle, pastoral and heroic, originated with Scanderbeg's soldiers who emigrated to Southern Italy after his death. The Coroneans grafted onto this primitive stock a cycle of Moreote provenance while giving the latter, originally rural, an urban veneer reflecting their social status. And since the first collectors of oral poetry were Byzantine priests, the veneer was religiously colored. We have already shown that some of the folk songs were incorporated into liturgy. The Arbëresh variant of the Lenora ballad, « Constantine and Garentina », is ritually sung during the Easter period while the other famous ballad, « Constantine the Younger », is performed at weddings.

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[92] From a personal letter by E. Hamp.

The nostalgic « Morea, the beautiful » is sung in chorus on a religious holiday fifteen days after Easter (tõn Myroforõn), while other rhapsodies are sung on Ascension day, which is also the day for performing the old custom of *vëllamja* « brotherhood » [93]. *Rapsodie* is like a Byzantine cathedral, with Scanderbeg cast, now in the role of a Byzantine despot, now in that of a holy Patriarch. Two examples illustrate this. In III 5, Scanderbeg gathers « the boyars and the bishops » (« buljërinë e peshpëkërat ») to advise him about his marriage. And when he dies (III 17), he goes to heaven, like Christ: « Po ndër qielt e hapta hinej / Skanderbekku i pafaan » « And the unfortunate Scanderbeg / entered the opened skies ».

Having explained the genesis of the Calabro-Albanian oral poetry as the superposition of at least three layers of civilization: pastoral Albanian, peasant Moreote, and feudal Calabrian, we now pass to examine that component of *Rapsodie* which is neither Albanian, nor Moreote, nor Calabrian, but stems from another geo-ethnic area which can be described as Macedo-Rumanian. Stephan Dušan's army which invaded Thessaly in 1346 was largely composed of Albanian soldiers whose exact provenance is unknown to us. Many of them settled in the conquered lands, from which they moved to Attica, Euboea and the Peloponnesus in later times. Most of them probably came from Epirus, following the course of the Vjosë (Aõs) river, whose springs are near Metsovon on the Aromunian Pindus. From the same region springs the river Pēneios which crosses Thessaly from Trikkala to Larissa to Tempe. The Arachthos and the Acheloos, which flow into the Bay of Ambracia and the Bay of Patras respectively, have their sources in the same region too. This used to be the very heart of

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[93] G. Ferrari, *Rapsodie e scene* (passim). According to Ferrari, on the Ascension day, before going to church, the rhapsody of Radovan and Rinë (*Raps.* III 22) is sung in chorus, while another rhapsody, in which Scanderbeg subdues an Albanian renegade after having invoked the assistance of God and St. Nicolas, is sung while going to church. Then the ceremony of brotherhood is celebrated by the priest. Finally, leaving the church, a chorus sings te ballad of Constantine and Garentina. Dorsa (*Sugli albanesi,* p. 157) writes that the Easter rituals are associated with a Scanderbeg victory over the Turks on the Easter day. The association of liturgy and oral epic poetry is also mentioned by Dora d'Istria (Elena Ghica): « The three Easter days are especially dedicated to dances and national songs, which suggests that Christ's victory over death has been idenfied with a Scanderbeg victory over the Turks obtained during Easter » (« La nationalité albanaise » in *Revue des deux mondes,* May 1866, p. 41). E. Giordano, in a short monograph on the Easter rituals in Frascineto and Ejanina, specifies that they include the choral singing of « Scanderbeg and the Renegade » (text pp. 16-7 in *Folklore albanese*) as well as the two ballads on Constantine mentioned above.

the Great Vlachia, an almost compulsory passage for the Albanian southern drive. Šufflay speaks of an Albano-Aromunian symbiosis in the Pindus, and the nationality of the rulers of Thessaly and Epirus in the second half of the 14th century (Peter Ljosha, Nicola Bua, Gjin Shpata) has been a moot point. The discussion is contingent on the vexed question of whether the Albanians are autochthones in Epirus or invaded it during the Middle Ages. The Albanian scholars have persistently upheld the former alternative [94], whereas the non-Albanian scholars have long opted for the latter.

According to Stadtmüller, the extreme representative of the expansion theory, the Albanians, the remnant of an ethnic group that had resisted the process of romanization by which the rest of Illyria was submerged, began their expansion in the 11th century, when the first Bulgarian Empire came to an end. The German historian maintains that while the Mat canton was the « proper *Reliktgebiet* », Northern Albania was the « Lebensraum » of the Albanians at the time [95].

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[94] For an answer to the question of autochthony by an Albanian linguist, see E. Çabej, « Die älteren Wohnsitze der Albaner » in *VII Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Onomastiche*, 1961. According to Çabej, present-day toponyms such as Shar, Shkup, Shkodër, Lesh, Drisht, Durrës, Kunavje, Drin, Buenë, Mat, Ishm derive from the ancient forms Scardus, Scupi, Scodra, Lissus, Drivastum, Dyrracchium, Candavia, Drinus, Barbanna, Mathis, Isamnus through phonetic changes characteristic of Albanian alone. Çabej then concludes that the Albanians were most probably autochthones in the areas marked by those toponyms (which does not include Epirus and which involves names that are not Indo-European in Albanian). For an answer to the same question by an Albanian historian, see K. Frashëri, « Trojet e shqiptarëve në shek. XV » in *KDSA* 1 (1969). In this article the author maintains that the rectangle Antivari-Prizren-Ohrid-Valona, found by the authoritative trio Thallóczy-Jireček-Šufflay to delimit medieval Albania, is based on the erroneous assumption that there were no Albanians living outside this zone since no historian mentions them. Frashëri makes the point that Albania in the Middle Ages was tantamount to Catholic Albania as a rule, the non-Catholic Albanian being called Bulgarian, or Serbian, or Greek. The error here is to have interpreted a name with obvious ethno-religious connotation as one having ethnic connotation alone. According to Frashëri, the Albanians have always been where they are found today. Considering furthermore that many Albanians today live outside the borders of present-day Albania (in Yugoslavia and Greece), the right word to use is « restriction », not « expansion ».

[95] « The territory which thus appears as the *Lebensraum* of the Albanian population in the early period of Albanian history is essentially the rectangle between the coastal plain of Lower Albania, the Shkumbin valley, the valley of the Black Drin and the valley of the unified Drin. By virtue of its geographical configuration, this region is the least accessible territory of the whole Balkan peninsula, intended, as it were, to be the dwelling-place of a freedom-loving population. As formely stated, however, we can consider with certainty only the

At the end of the 13th century they had already occupied an area corresponding to the greater part of actual Albania, from Lesh (Alessio) to Chimara on the Adriatic Sea, and from Prizren to Ohrid in the East [96]. Continuing their expansion drive, the Albanians occupied Epirus and then moved to Thessaly and the Peloponnesus towards the end of the 14th century [97]. Stadtmüller's theory relies basically on the argument that, of all the territory named Albania by Roman and Byzantine writers, the region of Mat alone was totally free from romanization, and therefore that region must be considered as the proper homeland of the Albanians. One could object that a certain degree of romanization would not necessarily affect the ethnolinguistic individuality of the Albanians, the question being determining the degree of romanization without excluding it.

We bring forward some pertinent historical facts. An anonymous source dated 1308 describes the Albanians as nomads living in tents in a zone bordered by the rivers Ersenta (Erzen), Mathia (Mat), Scumpino (Shkumbin) and Epasa (Apsus, Semen) [98]. Joannes Kantakuzenos, the Byzantine emperor and historian, writing about a half century later, characterizes the Albanians as unruly nomads having no cities [99]. The Venetian publicist Marino Sanudo tells us that, in 1329, the Catalan leader Don Alfonso Fadrique tried to expel the Albanians from Thessaly [100]. In 1350, Albanians and Catalans are on record as attacking the Venetian trading station of Pteleum in the Bay of Volos [101]. Referring to the Chronicle of Ioannina, Jireček points out that the Albanians, who had been hostile to the Greeks since the times of Andronikos III Paleologos, were happy to attack them and occupy the lands of the Greek archontes and stratiotes in Epirus and Thessaly, when Dušan's army invaded them [102]. In 1346, Manuel Kantakuzenos, prince of Misthra, hired Albanian troops to protect himself against the Greek archontes [103]. The Count of Mitra, a region close to Mount Pelion in

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Mati region as the proper *Reliktgebiet*, i.e. the territory unaffected by the romanization process » (*Forschungen* (1966), p. 120).

[96] See map in Stadtmüller's *Geschichte Südosteuropas* (1955), p. 204.

[97] Stadtmüller, *Forschungen*, pp. 28-30.

[98] *Anonymi descriptio Europae Orientalis* (edidit O. Gorka, Cracoviae, 1916, p. 26 ff.), quoted by Stadtmüller, *Forschungen*, p. 172.

[99] « Ἀλβανοί ἀβασίλευτοι... πόλιν οἰκοῦντες οὐδεμίαν... » (quoted by Stadtmüller, *ibid.*).

[100] K. Setton, *Catalan Domination of Athens* (1311-1388). Cambridge Mass. 1948, p. 254.

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* (1911), p. 394.

[103] Philippson, « Zur Ethnographie », p. 7.

Thessaly, is reported to have had 1,500 Albanian horsemen in his service in 1380 [104]. In 1402 and again in 1425, Venice invited Albanians to settle in Euboea and other Aegean islands [105]. At the beginning of the 15th century the Albanians had colonized about a third of the Greek territory [106].

Looking now at *Rapsodie* with this geo-historical outline in mind, we are surprised to run across a « Slavic » milieu in its very first canto. The unnamed hero of that rhapsody boasts of raping a « Slavic » girl: « Hapa derën e Shklavunit... vodha e vashëzën m'shtrat » « I opened the Slav's door... and raped the girl in her bed ». Since « Shklavun » is the albanization of Venetian « Schiavone », it would seem that the setting is Maina. This region, stretching alongside Mount Taygetus and extending into the sea in the form of a pointed finger (hence its Italian name « Braccio di Maina »), was partly populated with Albanians in the past [107]. The Venetians used to call Maina (and Tchakonia) « le montagne dei Schiavoni », while distinguishing their inhabitants as « Graecos et Albanenses » [108]. The Albanian Moreotes call the Greeks « Shkle » (pl. of *Shkla* from σκλάβος), the equivalent of « Schiavone », a word with hegemonic overtones [109], and use the

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[104] Setton, *Catalan Domination*, p. 254.

[105] K. Birēs, *Arbanítes* (1955), p. 338.

[106] Stadtmüller, *Geschichte Südosteuropas*, p. 206.

[107] Philippson (*op. cit.*, p. 9) mentions a Scoutarion in Maina, « a name with an Albanian ring ». According to Puşcariu (*Die rumänische Sprache* (1943), p. 331), Rum. « scutar », Lat. « scutarius » « the oldest shepherd » is the same as Alb. « skutér » « the owner of the sheepfold ». Skutaraj (Mali e Skutare) is a mountainous locality in Chimara (*A Gazetteer of Albania*).

[108] The expression is found in a Venetian document of 16 August 1481, in which the Venetian Senate instructs its governor in Monembasia how to deal with the Mainotes (Sathas, *Document inédits* I, p. XXI). Monembasia is the Venetian Malvaxia, from which the Albanian Moreotes have derived the adjective « marvazí », denoting a kind of grape: « vera rrushi të kuq e marvaziu » (*Raps.* II 15). In a book published in Venice in 1558, Portolano di Levante describes Maina as a mountainous region inhabited by Slavs: « Sopra Malvaxia da tramontana sono alte montagne de Schiavi » (Sathas, *Documents* 4, p. LIII). According to the Greek scholar (*Documents* 7, p. XXI), the Venetians have continued the Byzantine tradition of calling the Albanian inhabitants of Maina and Tchakonia Slavs. It is quite possible that the Venetian « schiavone » attributed to Mainotes has been mediated through the Albanians living there instead. (The inhabitants of a village in Tchakonia between the Eurotas and the sea still speak Albanian, according to Hubert Pernot, *Introduction à l'étude du dialecte Tsakonien*, « Les Belles Lettres », Paris, 1934, p. 14).

[109] The idea of the Albanian hegemony over Greece, which goes back to Fallmerayer's *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea* (1836), is accepted by Sathas (*Documents* 4, p. LIII).

idiom, « Di shklerisht »? « Do you know Greek »? to this day [110]. « Malet e Shklavunit » « le Montagne degli Schiavoni » appears in *Raps.* III 30 as the site of a Byzantine monastery where the son of Pjetër-Shini is sent to be educated. But he, whose father has been murdered, thinks of revenge instead. The vendetta motif would be additional proof for localizing the rhapsody in Maina, this region being the only one in Greece to practice that custom, according to Sathas. But the vendetta is also practiced by Slavs [111], and Pjetër-Shini (Petrašin) is a Serbian name — Hahn mentions Pjetroshinaj as village in Kastrat (Scutari) [112].

In *Raps.* I 4, « Malet e Pjetër Shtrorit » « the Mountains of Peter Shtrori », is a phrase in the pattern of, and probably in contrast to, « the Mountains of the Greeks ». The possible antagonist is « Misistrati », whose daughter is shown « weaving » and « embroidering » a « carpet », which has in it the images of herself, « her lord », the sun and the moon. The word for « carpet » in the text is « e shtruame » (« tappeto » in De Rada's translation), while « shtrori » seems also to derive from « shtruar » « laying on », « covering » (perhaps in analogy with « përçuar-ori » « ram leading a herd »). But « Shtrori » could

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[110] The idiom, which occurs in Reinhold's *Noctes Pelasgicae* (1855), is quoted by Miklosich (« Die Slavischen Elemente » in *SKWW* (*ph*) 18 (1870), p. 369). In Mandrica, an Albanian-speaking village in Bulgaria situated next to the Turco-Greek border, *shklerisht* means « Bulgarian », *Shklerlik* « Bulgaria » (D. Shuteriqi, « Fjalorthi i të folmes shqipe të fshatit Mandricë » in *Studime filogjike* 2 (1965), pp. 153, 167). The Albanians of Ucraina call the Bulgarians *shkla* (S. Islami, « Matériel linguistique des colonies albanaises d'Ucraine » in *Studia albanica* 2 (1965), p. 168). E. Hamp notes (« Early Slavic Influence on Albanian » in *Linguistique balkanique* 2 (XIV), p. 17) that Sofikò (Korintía) « possesses one very interesting word with overtones, not a source, that are slavic: *šklerišt* « Greek, in the Greek language » ⟨**skla()n-ist-* ⟨**sklavVn-*. Obviously the meaning is traditionally 'the neighboring foreigner', as with *Welsh, Vlah,* etc. ». A song from Poros collected by Meyer (*Albanesische Studien* V in *SAWW* (*ph*) 134 (1896), Song No. 2) uses *shklerisht* in the sense described by Hamp: « Dua një të diturë / ndë kurm të jet i shqiturë, / të më flasë francozisht, / ketu ati edhe *shklerisht,* / të më flasë ellinisht, / gjithëmonë arbërisht ». A. Bellusci, who visited recently some Greco-Albanian villages, reports that the expression, « ata flasën shklerisht » « they speak in a foreign language », is heard in Kranidhion. Argolis (« Rilievi sulle comunità albanesi di Grecia » in *Shêjzat* 9-12 (1967), p. 345. He further reports an analogous expression in use in San Costantino Albanese (Basilicata): « ai nomren shklerisht » « he talks in Italian » (see Giordano, *Dizionario,* p. 310). A native of Koryni (Thebes), pronounced *shklerisht,* meaning « Greek », before me quite recently.

[111] Cf. Miklosich, « La vengeance du sang chez les Slaves » in *SKWW* (ph) 37, 1887.

[112] Hahn, *Albanesische Studien,* p. 192.

also have another meaning, the verb « shtruar » being used figuratively in the sense of « subjugating » (cf. Eng. « putting down »), as in the expression, « Turqia shtroi Shqipërinë » « Turkey subdued Albania ». Thus « Peter the carpet-maker » could also be « Peter the subjugator » — many an emperor in the past had an appellative denoting his humble origins. The Albanians who invaded Greece were shepherds and peasants, weaving was part of their pastoral and agricultural civilization. But the rhapsody's theme is artistic weaving, not weaving *tout court*, and the former characterizes urban civilization. Such was the civilization in the flourishing seaports of Coron, Modon and Nauplia, the alleged home of the rhapsodies constituting the Moreote cycle. But the weaving industry was also prosperous among the Calabro-Albanians in the past [113], and is still alive in Cerzeto and the adjacent villages. An ethnolinguistic analysis of the rhapsody reveals the Coronean veneer overlaying a Moreote tradition, possibly alluding to the fights of the Albanian peasants against the Despot of Misthra. Misisthrates' daughter « with her maids around her » (« me arrotulla kriate », where the last word is Spanish, « creada ») is in sharp contrast with Pjetër Shtrori nestled in his « mountainous » site somewhere in Arcadia.

Raps. II 6 displays a toponym, Rindina (Rendina), situated, according to V. Dorsa [114], north of Karpenision in the Agrafa region. Another Rindina is situated on Lake Belbos in the Chalcidic peninsula — Capidan reports that the Aromunians living along the Rendina river were once called Vlahorinhini [115]. The rhapsody celebrates a military victory under the leadership of Radavan and his friend, the son of Fuha. We have already drawn attention to the Slavic overtones of « Radavan »; « Fuha » is more difficult to ascertain. Šufflay writes that « Vlachs, Bulgarians and Albanians » lived together in the Stagia bishopric in Thessaly in 1346 [116]. Referring to the Chronicle of Ioannina (1400), the Croatian historian mentions the defeat that Sguros Spatas

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[113] *Milosao* has many references to weaving and manufacturing. An example is the beginning of Canto 28: « Bells were ringing, drums were beating / while my sister, a black scarf on her head, measured a fabric / of wool and silk / woven by her mother ». — For the textile industry in Cerzeto and the adjacent villages, see Giovanna Collauto, « Ricchezze del Mezzogiorno: la tessitura italo-albanese » in *Enapi* 6 (1970): 15-20.

[114] Note in *Rapsodie*, p. 43. — Rendina is specified as Aromunian by Capidan (*Les Macédo-Roumains* (1943), p. 166).

[115] A document discovered in the Kastamonitu Abbey at Mount Athos specifies that the Vlahorinhini, coming from Bulgaria, attacked the Abbey (*ibid.*).

[116] *Srbi i Arbanasi*, p. 78.

suffered at the hands of Vonga βογχόες , described as « serbo-albanitiko-bulgaro-vlach » [117], whom Šufflay identifies as the lord of Zardaria, Vonga and Vuga being variants [118]. He adds that the son of Vonga (Vuga) had married a lady from the Musachi family. The location of the toponym on the one hand and, on the other, the association of the two heroes, one an Albanian with a Slavic name and the other the son of a person described as the very embodiment of ethnic syncretism in 14th century Thessaly, seem to adumbrate historical facts.

The rhapsody that celebrates Radavan's victory ends with the following lines:

> The young men of Rendina
> played the discus game
> for Radavan's glory.
> The young women of Rendina
> danced in chorus
> for Radavan's glory.
> The chicken of Rendina
> cackled and laid eggs
> for Radavan's glory.

In a note to this rhapsody, De Rada considers spurious the last three lines, « un'aggiunta popolare ». The ending is indeed plebeian in spirit as against the heroic tone of the rest: the hymn of victory *desinit in piscem*. The coda suggests that the hero is a robber, a plunderer, a chicken thief (« hajn pulash » in Scutari). The song, a learned attempt to ennoble a rather vulgar tradition, results in a thrust-and-reply conveying contrasting feelings about an armed clash. One can tell who the victors are but not the vanquished. The victory is celebrated in a village bordering on Southern Thessaly; the hero is an Albanian with a Serbian name; a discus game — this takes us to classical Greece — is played in his honor. It seems impossible to reconcile such disparate elements. The discus (« rolje », a word unknown in Albania) reveals istelf, upon further analysis, to be a round cheese! De Rada describes the discus game in a note at the end of *Milosao* B so as to suggest a continuity of culture between Albanians and

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[117] *Ibid.*, p. 130. Also: Karl Hopf, *Geschichte Griechenlands vom Beginn des Mittelalters bis auf unsere Zeit*. Ersch-Gruber Encyclopedie, vols. 85-86, Leipzig 1867-68. Vol. 2, p. 103.

[118] *Srbi i Arbanasi*, p. 161.

Greeks [119]. But in the Prologue of *Skanderbegu* he lets the cat out of the bag when he writes that the premium in a discus game held in Arta went « to the victor [in the throwing] of the cheese » « të paritë te djathi » (« al vittorioso nel disco », in his own translation). In *Serafina* C III 2, the word « discus » is dropped altogether: « Luajin djathin / mb'udhë; e rrolja i shkoi përrëzë / kalit ». (« Giocavasi al cacio per la strada, e 'l formaggio le passò vicin de'piedi del cavallo »). A sheep cheese having a round form, the *manure*, is popular both among the Calabro-Albanians and the Albano-Aromunians, while the *kaçkavall* (Rum. « cascaval » It. « caciocavallo »), a kind of hard cheese manufactured in various Balkan countries, is a specialty of the Aromunians of Veroia [120]. A game in which a round cheese is thrown immediately identifies the society in which it originated as pastoral. This was the kind of society that characterized the Albanian tribes when they invaded Greece, Byzantine historians report. De Rada collected the song from a woman by the name of Zibia from Santa Sofia, he tells us in the Preface to *Rapsodie* B. (It is interesting to note that Antonio Scura from Vaccarizzo has « the son of the city's lord » « të birit të dukës hores » substitute for « the son of Fuha » in the same song in his own collection [121].)

The son of Fuha, who in this rhapsody appears as Radavan's partner grooming him for a public appearance, is shown in *Raps.* I 6 « walking in the streets / with his cap lowered on his eyebrows » (« ture vatur rugë më rugë / me kësulë sivet ») and throwing an orange to a girl on her verandah. The detail of the orange thrown to a girl recalls the classical custom of μελομαχία [122]. The learned element is here superimposed on an oral material probably originated in an Albano-Macedonian milieu.

Another rhapsody (III 27) tells of a man named Haredin (Hajredin is a Turkish name) whose daughter has been abducted by Turkish sailors. Her father finally discovers her in Salonika [123], married to a Turkish lord, but fails to persuade her to quit her husband. The rhapsody mentions Candreva and Marchianò as families living in the

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[119] Marchianò describes the discus game as follows in *Poemi albanesi*: « The usage is to throw back the discus [a wooden plate, according to note p. 9] from the point at which it has touched the ground » (note p. 153). The « discus » [sic] « is tied by a string twisted many times around the thumb » (note. p 44).

[120] Puşcariu, *Die rumänische Sprache,* p. 265.

[121] Scura, *Gli Albanesi in Italia* (1912), p. 276.

[122] According to G. Ferrari (*Canti albanesi,* note 19 p. 187), « the custom was in use among the Calabro-Albanians until two decades ago ».

[123] Salonika appears in *Milosao* 2.

same place as Haredin. Two stratiotes by the name of Candreva appear in a Venetian document of 30 April 1541 [124]. Candreva is a frequent Rumanian name while Candrôva is an Aromunian village situated west of Salonika, close to Vodena (Edhessa), a village inhabited originally by Albanian shepherds, according to Capidan [125]. Marchianò is the name of a family from Macchia (perhaps a later addition). We saw that Salonika appears in *Milosao* 2 whose real setting is Macchia; in the rhapsody under consideration Salonika is somehow associated with Macchia through the Marchianò family. Considering the parallel between the associations of family names with toponyms in both songs, we can assume that the toponym is not sheer invention, but is based on family tradition.

At a first look Salonika's appearance in a Calabro-Albanian folk songs seems gratuitous. But the Macedonian capital is not really far from Ohrid, a compulsory station in a survey of Calabro-Albanian poetic topography. We just saw that Albanian shepherds lived in Candrôva west of Salonika. And a document of 1426 has John Castrioti, Scanderbeg's father, bequeath two of his villages in Northern Albania to the Bulgarian Monastery of Chilandar at Mount Athos [126]. Fragment I 9 takes us to the Ohrid area. The folk song fragment, « Duro zëmër e duro, / Sa duroi malji me borë » « Suffer, my heart, suffer like / the mountain under the snow! », has been incorporated without modification into *Milosao* 11. A variant of the same has been incorporated into a poem by Lasgush Poradeci based on a folk song which is heard in the Ohrid Sea area: « Duro, vashë, të durojmë / si duron mali dëborën! » « Suffer, maiden, suffer with me. / like the mountain under the snow! » If we exclude — as I think we should — the possibility of a literary influence in this case, we are left with the unavoidable conclusion that the coincidence reveals common ethnic ties. Other coincidences support that conclusion. *Raps.* I 18 ends with the lines, « Nd'ë gjarpër çë e zu / Kanë lëpusha fushazit, / Nd'ë dorë çë e ngau / Ajo e do për vethenë » « If a snake bit her, / there are herbs in the fields [to heal her], / if a hand touched her / she wants it for herself ». A love song from the Pogradeci region includes the following lines: « Nd'e zu gjarpri, u shëroftë; / Nd'e zu trimi, u trashëgoftë »! « If the girl was bitten by a snake, may she heal soon; / if she was taken by a young man,

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[124] Sathas, *Documents* 8, pp. 336-7.

[125] Capidan, *Die Mazedo-Rumänen* (Bucarest, 1941), p. 14.

[126] S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici Srpskih država srednjega veka.* No. 62, pp. 467-8. Quoted by Noli, *George Castrioti,* p. 111.

may she be happy with him! »[127]. A collection of folk songs by Spiro Dine from Vithkuq (Korçë) includes the following children's rhyme (in *Mbledhës të hershën* 3 (1961), p. 165):

Kolendra, milendra.
Sara vara godina,
Ciu-ciu, vak-vak,
Nem, moj babo, një kulaç,
Se të bie me çomak,
Pa ta bënj kokën me gjak.

The last three lines (the first three are childish jargon) mean: « Give me, grandmother, a pancake, / otherwise I'll hit you with a club / so as to make your head bleed ». Gustav Weigand's collection of Aromunian songs includes the following[128]:

Kolindă, malindă,
tsareva godina
tsintsi vake,
dăn! babo, nă kulakă;
să baneadza vako
vako ku yietsel.

« Kolinda, malinda, / a most happy year / (with) five cows! / Give me, grandmother, a pancake / so that the cow may live, / the cow and the calf »! The second line in the Aromunian Christmas song is Bulgarian and means « a kingly year ». The folk song was collected in Bitola (Manastir), a city where Bulgarians, Aromunians and Albanians have been living together for centuries. The Albanian song collected by Dine is a childish corruption of the Aromunian song collected by Weigand, « tsintsi vake » becoming « ciu-ciu, vak-vak ».

A reading of other rhapsodies further confirms the existence of a primitive layer of civilization common to both Albanians and Aromunians (Macedo-Rumanians). We saw that early 14th century sources mention Albanians as nomads living in tents. The word for « tent » in *Rapsodie* is both *shatorē* and *spërvjer*, the latter mostly a battle tent: « Vu spërvjeret Skanderbegu » « Scanderbeg had his tents pitched » (III 9). But, « ngrëjtin nji shatorē / Duart e Fatje t'bardhë » « The hands of a bright Fairy / raised a pavilion » (I 2). A fairy in a pavilion rather than a palace must be a nomadic fairy. Bulg. « katunin » « nomad » « one living in tents » has the same stem as Alb. « katund », Rum. « catun » « village », especially «pastoral village»

[127] M. Kuteli, *Këngë e brithma nga qyteti i djegur* (Tirana, 1944), p. 110.
[128] Weigand, *Die Aromunen* II (1894), p. 73.

« Hirtendorf » (Jireček) [129]. The Arbëresh have for « village » both « katund » and « fshat »; but the former is much more frequent. Jokl derives « fshat » from Lat. « massatum » (« massa » « estate »), a word with sedentary connotation [130]. « Fshatar » « peasant » is little used in Arbëresh, which has « katundar » instead. De Rada has « fshatër » « vassal » (*Serafina* C III 5) and « shatër » « squire » « horseman » « vassal » (*Serafina* C, passim). « Shatër », which is unknown in Shqip, is also found in *Rapsodie* (I 2 and III 20). The word, apparently an apheresis of « fshatër », seems to be De Rada's invention. If so, it is striking that a neologism connoting a peasant (Giordano's dictionary has « shatar » « zappatore » — from « shat » « hoe » — « contadino ») is made to denote a horseman and, by extension, a knight: a case of sublimative language.

7. *The Albanian-Aromunian Symbiosis.*

The thesis of those who explain the common elements in Albanian and Rumanian by postulating the coexistence of the people speaking these languages in a zone situated in the very heart of the Balkan peninsula receives marginal support from an ethnolinguistic inquiry into *Rapsodie* as well as De Rada's works. The inquiry reveals the presence in their Albano-Greco-Italian texture of a fourth cultural element, which we can call Macedo-Rumanian, or Daco-Misian. Historians and linguists have already paved the way. We have mentioned Šufflay's theory of the Bulgaro-Rumano-Albanian symbiosis in the Great Vlachia, and we should mention here his other theory of another triple symbiosis between Serbian farmers and Albanian and Rumanian shepherds in a zone delimited by Ragusa and Ulćin (Dulcigno) on the coast, and Prizren and the Lumë region on the mainland. The Rumanians were assimilated in the long run, leaving traces in toponyms such as Dormitor and Visitor, two mountain peaks in Montenegro close to the Albanian border. According to Stadtmüller, « the two peoples [Albanians and Rumanians] lived in tight, long and lasting symbiosis, judging from their many common linguistic features » [131]. To Barić, the old home of the Albanians is Dardania-Paeonia, Illyrian regions invaded by Thracians in the 3rd century [132]. The

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[129] « Staat und Gesellschaft » in *DAWW* (*ph*) 56 (1912), p. 38.

[130] *Linguistisch-Kulturhistorische Untersuchungen* (1923), p. 141.

[131] Stadtmüller, *Geschichte Südosteuropas*, p. 202.

[132] *Hŷmje në historín e gjuhës shqipe* (transl. by H. Thaçi & H. Kaleshi). « Mustafa Bakija ». Prishtinë 1955, pp. 49-50.

Hungarian invasion in the 9th century pushed southwards the Rumanians living around that zone. Jokl, a supporter of the Illyro-Thracian origin of Albanian, explains some toponyms in Mirditë such as Ungrej and Orosh (from Hung. Varosh) with Rumanian morphology on the assumption that the Rumanian had linguistic contacts with the Hungarians. Barbçort (from Rum. « bărbăcior » « male »), a locality close to the Mirditë border, is to him a clear indication of Rumanian infiltration [133]. In recent times, V. Georgiev maintains that « the Albanian language is the actual heir of the Daco-Misian », the old home of the Albanians being situated in close proximity to the home of the Rumanians [134].

Albanians and Rumanians lived obscurely as wandering shepherds in the mountainous regions of the peninsula in the high Middle Ages (7-11th cent.). The political vicissitudes in the latter had little or no impact upon them. They started their expansion at about the same time. The Rumanians first occupied the Pindus range in the 10th century, from where they passed into Thessaly and the rest of Greece. Then they broke through the Slav-occupied zone in three other directions, reaching Istria in the Northwest, Dobrudja in the Northeast, and Siebenbürgen in the North (about 1200). In their turn, the Albanians first occupied the Adriatic coast, and then West-Macedonia and Epirus (11-13th cent.) During this period Albania was part of the Byzantine Empire and the Despotate of Epirus (1204-1318), the capitals of the latter being Ioannina, Arta, and finally Salonika. Ohrid was the see of the autonomous Bulgarian Church with jurisdiction over the Vlachs in the whole of Bulgaria since 1018. Stephan Dušan conquered Ohrid in 1334 and, after his death, the city was « ruled by Serbian and Albanian nobles » [135]. The Serbian influence, « whose traces are found in all manuscripts and inscriptions of the 14th centuries », vanished about the middle of the 16th century; the Archbishopric of Ohrid became a Greek center, having jurisdiction over not only Albania and Macedonia, Malta and the Rumanian principalities, but also the Greeks of Southern Italy [136].

It is uncertain whether Rumanians preceded Albanians into Myzeqe and its adjacent regions, or occupied them at about the same time, or later. G. Weigand counted thirty-eight Aromunian villages

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[133] « Rumänisches aus Albanien » in *Studia albanica* (1964) 2, p. 79.

[134] *Introduzione alla storia delle lingue indo-europee* (1966), p. 154.

[135] Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren*, p. 466. Andrea Gropa, who held the title of Grand Župan, was the lord of Ohrid after King Vlkašin's death (*ibid.* p. 433).

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 467.

and hamlets (many with mixed Albanian population) in Muzeqe, Skrapar and Mallakastër [137]. Armeni (Ermeni, Ermenji) in Skrapar is most likely a metathesis of « rëmenj » — pl. of « rëmër » (Rum. « romîn » « slave ») — meaning « soiltiller », a name used by Albanians for Vlachs. The same word is found without rhotacism among the Calabro-Albanians — we quote from Giordano's dictionary: « *rumën-i* pl. *rumënj* sm. rumeno...: *vemi ka rumënjtë*, andiamo nella contrada abitata (denominata) dai rumeni (Frascineto) ». There are two villages by the name of Rëmënj, one near Gramsh, the other near Pogradec [138]. A locality Rëmâj is found in the city of Scutari, Fusha e Rëmâjit, previously used as a Catholic burying ground. The Scutari Cadaster mentions « dobranci e Vlach » as a locality inhabited by nomadic shepherds situated on the outskirks of that city [139].

An Aromunian enclave (with mixed population) is found in Dangëlli (Korçë), including Frashër [140]. The village is the home of the nomadic Faršerioti tribe. « Fráshër » is the rhotacised form of « fráshën » (from Lat. « fraxinus »). A Janj (Jagn) Frashini appears in *Raps.* III 7 together with other (Calabro-Albanian) heroes: Kost Mortatti, Ndree Turielja, Nik Petta. The name of a village in the Pollino range, Frasnitë (Ital. Frascineto) — its inhabitants call themselves Frashnjotë — derives apparently from « frashën ». The pastoral way of life is still thriving in Frasnita [141], which includes — we just mentioned it — a quarter inhabited by « Rumeni ». Another Faršeriote enclave is found northeast of Korçë on Mount Morava [142]. Many Vlach villages on Mount Gramos in the same area existed in the past, and Gramostea, the center, is today a heap of ruins. A group of Aromunian villages in the mountainous region which is the watershed between the rivers Shkumbin and Devoll has survived [143].

Not far from Korçë, where many Aromunians lived (Weigand counted six hundred families), is Moskopolis (Alb. Voskopojë). Founded, according to tradition, in the 16th century, Moskopolis flourished

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[137] The center is Fier (Arom. Feariča « fern »), other villages being Kosovë, Libofshë, Kolonjë, Kjatrë, Imishtë, Valdisë, Diviakë, Rodostinë, Levan, Frakull, Gradishtë, Armen (Ermen), according to Capidan's map (*Les Macédo-Roumains*, 1943). Papahagi's map (*Dictionarul*, 1963) has five villages.

[138] Çabej, « Studime rreth etimologjisë » in *Studime filologjike* (1965) 3, p. 41.

[139] Cordignano, *Catasto veneto* 1, p. 110.

[140] Four villages: Miçan, Zavalan, Zerqan, Frashër (according to Capidan). Kustref, Kurtesh, Zerqan Frashër (according to Papahagi).

[141] See A. Bellusci, « La pastorizia a Frascineto » in *Shêjzat* 1964-70.

[142] Three villages: Plasë, Stropan, Moravë (Capidan); Plasë, Dishnicë (Papahagi).

[143] Three villages: Lëngë, Niçë, Grabovë (Capidan and Papahagi).

rapidly, reaching a population of about 40,000 in 1769, when it was destroyed by the *krdžaliji*, a multinational army of Moslem bandits who were the plague of Macedonia and Bulgaria in the time of Selim III. Moskopolis was the seat of an Academy, « the most famous school in the peninsula » (Weigand), which reached its peak in the first half of the 18th century. It numbered among its members Theodor Kavallioti (probably from Kavalla), who wrote a manual in three languages, Albanian, Aromunian and Greek, the Προτοπειρία [144], and Master Daniel, who compiled a dictionary in four languages, Albanian, Aromunian, Bulgarian and Greek, both indispensable instruments for a study of the Aromunian dialect first recorded by them [145].

The Albanian Gramosteni and the Greek Aromunians in the Pindus range called the Great Vlachia live in an area which constitues a geographical unit, from Furka to Gardhiki [146]. East of the Pindus range is Zagori, the Old Vlachia, « the purest Rumanian zone » until the beginning of the century, according to Capidan. Other enclaves are found in Thessaly. One is located between Larissa and Trikkala, another at the foot of Mount Olympos, a third in the Veroia district. Four villages, including Cândrova, constituting another enclave between Veroia and Vodena (Edhessa), are inhabited by Aromunians stemming from Albania [147]. Another enclave comprising many Albanians is found in the Kasturia (Kostur) region [148]. Finally, Aromunians have been living (together with Albanians) in various cities of Macedonia such as Ohrid, Bitola, Krušovo, Skopje (Alb. Shkup), Tetovo, Veles, Prilep, Kavalla (see Papahagi's map).

Some Byzantine writers had difficulties in describing the ethnic mosaic created in the southern part of the Balkan peninsula which had experienced the invasions of Serbian, Bulgarian, Rumanian and Albanian tribes one after another. Sometimes these writers used

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[144] The work was published by Johann Thunmann in his *Untersuchungen über die Geschichte der östlichen europäischen Völker*. Leipzig, 1774.

[145] Moskopolis also housed a printing press which was especially productive in 1740-4. — Shipshkë, close to Voskopojë, is marked as Aromunian by Papahagi.

[146] Capidan, *Les Macédo-Roumains*, p. 13. The Great Vlachia's center is Aminciu (Metsovon).

[147] Fetitsa, Patičina, Gramatikova, Cândrova (Capidan and Papahagi).

[148] Six villages: Pipilište, Blatsa, Vlahoclisura, Nevesca, Negovani, Belcameni. — The last two were founded by refugees from Pelicati (Gramos range), according to H. Kristo Negovani, an Orthodox priest and an Albanian writer who was murdered by Greek fanatics in 1905 because of his Albanian propaganda (the information about the foundation of Negovani and Belkameni is found in G. Petrotta, *Popolo, lingua e letteratura* (1931), p. 394).

expressions such as Bulgaro-Albano-Vlachs, or Serbo-Albano-Bulgaro-Vlachs [149]. The akward expressions describe correctly the ethnic mosaic in question. Similarly, a correct description of the Arbëresh culture would be a string-like sequence of five ethnic attributes modifying the Albanian substance: a Serbo-Bulgaro-Vlacho-Greco-Italo-Albanian culture.

With respect to the Bulgarian element, we recall that Bulgarian toponyms are found in the greater part of Albania, excluding the North-Eastern part where the Albanian-Serbian symbiosis took place, but including Mirditë and Mat. Southern Albania was a Bulgarian zone in the Middle Ages. Berat (from Bulg. « Belgrad » « the White Castle »), called Βουλγαρόπολις by the Byzantines, was the see of Bulgarian Khans (early 9th century) before it became the residence of Byzantine captains and Greek despots [150]. In the Mat valley, a village, Bulgër, and a locality, Kulla e Bulgrit, the Bulgarian's Tower, are indications that the Bulgarians reached that region. According to Barletius, Scanderbeg's army included many Bulgarians from Upper Dibër, while Lower Dibër was inhabited by Albanians. Describing the Turkish capture of Sfetigrad in Dibër in 1449, Barletius makes it clear that Scanderbeg's garrison there was mostly Orthodox [151]. Dibër borders on Mirditë, the latter on Mat. According to Šufflay, the Mirditi came from Ohrid in 1466, when Turkish persecution started [152]. Communion in both Roman and Byzantine ways was administered in Mirditë as late as the 19th century, while the Greek cross could be seen in some of the churches together with traces of Byzantine style in the murals [153]. The « doloma », a characteristic Bulgarian garment, was still worn by the Mirditi when Nopcsa visited them [154].

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[149] The Chronicle of Ioannina has σερβαρβανιτοβουλγαροβλάχους; Catraris (Boissonade, *Anedocta Greca*, 11, p. 677), βουλγαραλβανιτοβλάχους.

[150] Šufflay. « Städte und Burgen » in *DAWW(ph)* 63 (1924), p. 32.

[151] « Inferior [Dibra] plana fere tota est frugiferis circundata campis, et rerum omnium fertilibus Albani et Epirotae incolunt loca, fortissimi bello populi, quorum praecipue armis Castriotus et servavit, et auxit imperium [...] Superior Dibra montuosa est et aspera, ferax tamen, et Macedoniam tum ipsa loci vicinitate, tum similitudine morum contingens, Bulgari sive Triballi habitant, ferox in armis gens, et non minus Scanderbego multis praeclarae virtutis fideique meritis grata. Propior tamen externis, quam Epiroticis moribus, et abhorrens in multis ab Albano cultu Graecanico ritu victibabat, et plerasque eorum superstitiones sequebatur ». (Barletius, *De vita, moribus ac rebus*, 1537, pp. 139-40).

[152] *Srbi i Arbanasi*, p. 63.

[153] H. Hécquard, *Histoire et description* (1863), p. 226.

[154] Nopcsa, « Beiträge zur Vorgeschichte und Ethnologie Nordalbaniens » in *Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen* 12 (1912), p. 239.

Rodotà mentions a 16th century settlement in the Benevento district, whose inhabitants from Upper Dibër are described as « spurious Christians », « contaminated by the Bulgarian heresy » (« rozzi cristiani... infetti dagli errori dei Bulgari ») [155]. D. Zangari, who has patiently searched the Archivio di Stato in Naples, points out that « Albanians and Slavs (Schiavoni) are associated routinely in the Archive papers ». He adds that Bulgarian toponyms are found in the Castrovillari zone, such as the Ponte del Vulgaro (the Bulgarian's Bridge) and the church of San Nicola dei Bulgari, while the memory of a Bulgarian settlement in that zone persists [156].

One cannot tell whether these « Bulgari » and « Schiavoni » crossed the Adriatic, or — via Epirus and Greece — the Ionian Sea. Describing the Albanian-speaking area in Greece (the continuum Megaris-Attica-Beotia-Locris area, Southern Euboea, northern Andros, the Peloponnesus), E. Hamp points out that the number of Albanian toponyms is rather small, while some toponyms are of Slavic derivation: Γολέμι Golémi, Γκέρμπεσι Gjérbesi, Βαριμπόπι Varibòpi, Καλέντζι Kaléndji. « It is further interesting to note » — he writes — « that many of the surest Albanian toponyms have no identifiable etymology within Albanian or elsewhere, and that a significant proportion of the Albanian toponyms in Greece which do not have an identifiable etymology are of ultimate Slavic derivation » [157].

In Sofia's National Library « Cyrillus and Methodus », a 16th century Turkish register is kept which provides information on the sociopolitical situation created in the Morea after the Turkish conquest of the peninsula in 1460 (the register must be immediately posterior to that date) [158]. The register lists the names of localities in the North and North-Central Morea which were granted to Turkish « spahis » (the equivalent of Byzantine « stratiotes ») as «zeamets » and « timars » (the equivalent of Byzantine « pronias »). The register includes the names of families paying taxes to the spahis, their lords. Of a total of 198 localities, 155 are specified as Albanian (« Djemaati Arnavudan »), the rest being Greek. But while the Greek villages consist of 50-100 houses, the Albanian hamlets have 10-20 houses, so that the population is about equally divided between the two ethnic groups.

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[155] Rodotà, *Dell'origine* 3, pp. 64 and 66.

[156] D. Zangari, *Le colonie italo-albanesi* (1941), p. 76.

[157] « The Albanian Diffusion of Slavic Toponyms in Greece » in *VI Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Onomastiche* 2, 1963, pp. 137, 138, 143-4.

[158] See Stojkov, Rusi & Thomas Kacori, « Një regjistër osmano-turk i shek. XV për Shqiptarët e Peloponezit » in *Studime historike* (1966) 3.

Looking now at the family names (which correspond in great part to those listed by Sathas as feudataries and most of which are also found among the Arbëresh), one notices that many first names (Braile, Ester, Gollomi, Miles, Oratio, Pelegrini) as well as last names (Goria, Misia, Rado, Oskardi, Romanos, Silla, Varibobi) sound Slavic and Rumanian rather than Albanian. Yet the onomastics is mostly Albanian, but intermingled with Rumanian, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian. Thus, the hamlet Buze (Buzi today, in the district of Tryphilìa) includes six families by the name of Vlachioti and five families named Buzi, Leka, Mavruti, Makrasi and Makreshi. Three Vlachioti families are found in the village of Slatka (Zlatka) — meaning « sweet in Slavic — whose inhabitants are Jani Serbano [Serbian], Leka Bisbardi (« bishtbardhi » means « white tail » in Alb.), Lazaro Prifti (« prift » « priest ») as well as four Slatka families [159].

The tribe of Malakasi, an Aromunian village in the Great Vlachia [160], played a considerable role in the history of Epirus in the 14th century [161]. Dimitri de Malacasa appears, together with Petrus Brescia and Theodorus Lopes, as an Albanian representative in the 1471 capitulation of San Demetrio [162]. Giorgio Buonacasa is the signatary of the 1488 capitulation of Palazzo Adriano (Sicily). The name has been interpreted by some scholars [163] as the Italian translation of « Mirëshpia », probably thinking of « Mirdita » (Which, by the way, has nothing to do with « mirëdita » « good morning », this one a translation of Ital. « buongiorno »). « Mirë » appears as last — not first — part of a compound in toponyms and family names: Gruemirë (a North-Albanian village), Bukmiri (a family name in Shijak, Durazzo). The probabilities are that Buonacasa is the Italian translation of a non-Albanian name with nobiliary connotation. Again, the capitulation of Piana (1488) includes Giovanni Barbato among the Albanian representatives. The name, from Rum.-Arom. « barbat » « man » is

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[159] *Ibid.*, pp. 159 and 162.

[160] According to Jireček, « the Pindus Albanians of Emperor Kantakuzenos, the Malakasi, Mesariti, and Bui tribes, were not Albanians, but Rumanians—they are still known as Malakasi and Bui » (« Staat und Gesellschaft » in *DAWW* (ph) 56 (1912), p. 35). According to Capidan, « malacás » is Alb. *mal i kafshëve* « Berg der Tiere » (*Dacoromania* 7 (1934), p. 124).

[161] Stadtmüller, *Forschungen, n*ote p. 93.

[162] This capitulation, first included in G. Tocci's *Memoria* (1865), was republished by T. Pittito, « Gli Albanesi in Calabria » in *Archivio storico della Calabria* 3-4 (1914).

[163] G. Schirò, *Canti tradizionali* (preface); La Mantia, *I capitoli delle colonie*, p. XII.

frequent among the Arbëresh [164], while « barbaç » « uncle » « old man » is very common among the Greco-Albanians. Mugnos notes that Giovanni Barbato was an « interpreter » [165] when the agreement was signed, a function he could perform, one imagines, on account of the affinities between Italian and Rumanian.

Some Arbëresh topographic nouns have correspondent Aromunian toponyms. « Fjamur » « flag », which is current among the Arbëresh — De Rada called his periodical *Fiamuri Arbërit* — comes from NGr. φλάμμουρον, which derives from Lat. « flammula » [166]. « Flamburar » « flagbearer » « chieftain », recurs in Venetian documents [167]. Flamburar is also a village in the Great Vlachia [168]. Laca is another village in the same area. The toponym appears as a topographic noun, « lakë » « slope » « plain » in *Raps.* I 18 (also in *Milosao* 10, and *Serafina* C II 3). The word with this meaning is current among the Greco-Albanians: « laka-mbikatun(t) » « the plain above the village » [169].

We now look at the vocabulary and grammar in *Rapsodie* and De Rada's works. *Raps.* II 26 has « shabje » « sword » (Rum. « sabie », Srb. «sablja ») alongside with the synonymous « mahjerë » (NGr. μάχαιρα « knife »), neither one used in Shqip. *Raps.* III 4 contains the phrase « pika e qiellvet » « la folgore de' cieli (De Rada's transl.) « thunderbolt from the sky ». « Pikë » is used both in Shqip, « Të rëntë pika »! « May you be struck by the thunderbolt »! and Aromunian: « Tseal Nika, Tseal Nika / daole s nă agudeaskă pika »! (recorded by Weigand) [170]. In *Raps.* I 20 « qatrë » « lastra di ghiaccio » « slab of ice » appears — Kjatrë is an Aromunian village in Muzeqe. *Raps.* II 10 includes « adunarë » « become aware » « realize » — a word unknown in Albania — from Rum.-Arom. « aduná » « get together » « unite ». A significant association, « shapkën e lavutëzën » « the hat and the lute » (acc.), is found in *Raps.* III 6. These two words, both

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[164] Examples: Giovanni T. Barbaci, a priest from Mezzojuso; Nicola Barbato, the well-known socialist from Piana.

[165] Mugnos, *Teatro genealogico* 2, p. 202.

[166] C. Tagliavini, *La stratificazione del lessico* (1965), p. 125.

[167] Sathas (*Documents* VI, pp. 210-13) quotes one such document dated 25 March 1483, in which a « flamburar de la Morea » in the service of the Turks is reported conferring with Venetian authorities on how to deal with Albanian attacks against both Turks and Venetians in the Morea.

[168] Capidan, *Les Macédo-Roumains* (1937), p. 14.

[169] D. G. Moutsos & E. Hamp, « Linguistic and Cultural Categories in the Toponyms of a Greek-Albanian Township (Deme) » in *VIII International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, 1966, p. 313.

[170] *Die Aromunen* 2, p. 110, Song No. 69.

of Turkish origin according to Miklosich [171], are found in Albanian, Bulgarian and Rumanian, but not in Serbian: Alb. « lahutë », Bulg. « lauta », Rum. « lęutę »; and Alb. « shapkë », Bulg. « šapka », Rum. « šapkę » [172]. The phrase is proof that the rhapsody originated somewhere in Macedonia, in a Bulgaro-Vlach-Albanian milieu. The rhapsody's theme, unfaithfulness, is not typically Albanian, while its ethos is decidedly non-Albanian: the rhapsody is about a man who, betrayed by his wife, kills her and her lover, then cuts the two bodies to pieces which are pulverized by a millstone. This elaborate cruelty in taking revenge reminds one of such Byzantine practices as the blinding of war prisoners [173].

The heroine's name in *Milosao* is « e bilja e Kologresë » « the daughter of Cologrea » « the nun's daughter ». To call a person by his or her mother's name is tantamount to denying that person a legitimate father, according to Albanian ethics. Capidan informs us that the matronymic is frequent among the Rumanians and Aromunians, and it is also found in some localities of the Great Vlachia such as Metsovon [174]. Metsovon appears in *Serafina* B 3 in connection with Chimara in a political speech addressed by the folk song hero Dedë Skura to the Albanian « boyars » (« buljar »). The boyar class, which was powerful in Slavic countries and Rumania [175], is uncharacteristic of Albania. De Rada tells us (*Auto.* I,3) that his mother was from the Braile family while being related to two other families, Avati and Skiglizhi. « Avati » (the name of a noble family in Macchia) seems to be the Greek form of Alb. « abati » (Lat. « abbates »), a family name in the Scutari region, while Skiglizhi is difficult to ascertain [176]. On the other hand, Braile is Slavic: *-il* is a Slavic suffix and Brail appears in a Bulgarian folk song as a man's name [177]. The name has passed from Bulgarian into Rumanian (Braila is a Danubian port)

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[171] Miklosich, « Die Türkischen Elemente » in *SAWW* (*ph*) 34 (1884), pp. 118 and 162.

[172] « Shapkë » appears in Kavallioti (Thunmann, p. 224).

[173] Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren,* p. 195.

[174] *Les Macédo-Roumains* (1943), p. 193. Here are some examples in which the surname is the mother's: Spiru ali Pulica, Ciuşa ali Lene, Mundi ali Dimoane, Tica ale Lene, Opa ale Iţa, Tolu ale Ciacia (*ibid.* p. 71).

[175] Jireček (*La civilisation serbe,* 1920, p. 13) note that « boljarin », current in Bulgaria, Romania and Russia, has yielded to « vlastelin », meaning the same, in Serbia and Bosnia.

[176] Is Skiglizhi the same as Skilizzi, a family name found in Piana? (Skylitzes is the name of a Byzantine historian).

[177] Waltraud Werner, *Die männlichen Personennamen in den bulgarischen Volksliedern,* Harrasowitz, Wiesbaden 1965, p. 62.

as well as into Albanian: Brailàt is a locality in Labëri [178]. Salvatore Braile, a minor poet from San Demetrio, wrote the following stanza [179]:

Ka pyllza këndoi gjoni
e ka malthi sirkofani.
Pa shi këtje, manea Dhimoni,
na bën kënka edhe Xhuani.

« The owl sang from the wood, / the woodpecker from the hill. / And look here, by the Devil! / Even John is making verse ». According to Puşcariu. Alb. « gjon » « owl » corresponds to Rum. « ghionaie » « woodpecker » — both the Aromunians and the Meglenites have a form « gon » which is pronounced the same as Alb. « gjon » [180]. « Manea » (also « mënia » « mënja ») is an Arbëresh ejaculation of anger, according to Giordano. The Mirditi use « mana » in oaths: « mana Zotin »! « by God »! « for God's sake »! The same word seems to occur in a Rumanian curse: « Mănia lui Domnezeu »! « God damm him » [181]!

Arminò, a hero's name in *Rapsodie*, seems to be a derivative of « armăn », the name with which most of the Rumanians call themselves, while the Albanian Aromunians call themselves « romăni » « rămăni » « rumăni — without the prothetic *-a* [182]. « Arminò » is found twice in the phrase « ortej'e Arminòit » (the horde of Arminò » (II 18 and III 22), in which « ortejë » contains *-ea*, a Rumanian suffix. Another word with *-ea* is « ulkejë » in the phrase « ulkej'e maljevet » « the mountain she-wolf » (*Raps.* I 14) — the Shqip forms for the two words are « urdī » and « ulkojë » Arminò is a leader turned traitor, who is somehow responsible for the death of Radavan, the Albanian hero, in *Raps.* III 22. In II 18, he is an ally of Sultan Amurat. Either a traitor to his country, or an ally to the Turks, Arminò seems to stand for the type of the renegade in the Moreote cycle, almost certainly an ethnic representative in the Viconian sense — the rene-

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178 See A. Kostallari, « Contribution à l'histoire des recherches onomastiques » in *Studia albanica* (1965) 1, p. 45.

179 Giordano, *Dizionario.*

180 Puşcariu, *Die rumänische Sprache*, p. 329.

181 Ion Popinceanu, *Religion, Glaube and Aberglaube in der rumänischen Sprache*, H. Carl. Nüremberg 1964, p. 180.

182 Capidan, *Les Macédo-Roumains* (1943), p. 11 — The prothetic *a*, which appears in several words in *Rapsodie* as well as in De Rada's works, is a characteristic of the Aromunian dialect, especially with words beginning with *r-*: Rum. « român », Arom. « armăn »; Rum. « cumpăr », Arom. « acumpăr » (Puşcariu, *Die rumänische Sprache*, p. 268). *Rapsodie* has « arrotulla » for « rrotulla » (I, 2); « agëzuashi » for « gëzuashi » (I 14) — « arrotulla » is found in *Serafina* C I, 4; « agëzuashi » in *Milosao* 10, « aprapa » for « prapa » in *Serafina* C III 1.

gade in the Scanderbeg cycle is Ballaban, a historical figure (*Raps.* II 9).

It would seem, in the light of our findings so far, that two streams of Albanian emigration merged in the Morea, the one coming from North-Albania and Serbia, and other from East Albania and Macedonia. Both streams seem to have carried Aromunians with them [183]. But the Aromunians could not keep their ethnic individuality in the long run; they were either hellenized, like the Kopačari and the Sărăkăcăni, or identified with the Albanians who were, we saw, a hegemonic ethnic group. Their merger seems to have been especially conspicuous in Argolis, whose main city, Nauplia, was a Venetian dominion for a long time. Napoli di Romania, as the Venetians used to call it, was an unending reservoir for recruiting stratiotes, some of whom reached distinction. Manoli Blessi, who calls himself an Albanian while writing poems in Venetian dialect interspersed with Greek words, was most likely an albanized Aromunian. So probably was Nicola Masi (Masci), a military leader from Nauplia who, at the beginning of the 16th century, organized a squadron of 500 horsemen, known as the

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[183] The Pamalioti tribe living on the mountainous North-Albanian coast can be taken to illustrate the Albanian-Serbian-Aromunian symbiosis. Serbian nobles of the Pamalioti tribe lived in Ulćin (Ducigno), according to Šufflay (*Srbi i Arbanasi*, p. 10), who elsewhere notes that the name is a Venetian corruption of Alb. *malok* « mountaineer », a name with which the Albanians called themselves in the Middle Ages (« Provijest sjevernih Arbanasi », chap. 3, in *ArhASJE* 2 (1924). The same tribe is referred to as Aromunian in many Venetian documents of the beginning of the 15th century. In a document of 3 February 1424, the Republic approves of the concessions previously made to some Aromunian notables such as Petro Rossi, Niche Krute, Rado Borchi, Theodoro Chiurcho, Duke and Theodore Armenia through the intercession of the noble Niche Erman Pamalioti, « faithful » to the Republic. The concessions involve lands in Suacium (Shas) for the noble Niche Erman, and in Goran, Pistull, Tuz, Kërroq and Kakarriq for the other notables (Valentini, *Acta Albaniae veneta* 12, pp. 17-19). — The clothing nomenclature in Scutari has a striking resemblance with its Aromunian counterpart as described by Capidan — *Les Macédo-Roumains* (1943), pp. 44-45 —: « căciulă » « kësulë » (the word is also Arbëresh) « cap »; « cunduș » « kondosh » « waistcoat » (a Nasradin fable includes the refrain, « Ha, kondosh, e pi, kondosh! » « Eat, overcoat, and drink, overcoat! »); « maliot » « mallotë » « cloak »; « tălăgan » « tallagan » « a woollen coat »; « tâmbare » « tabare » « overcoat »; « țaruhi » « caruqe » « light shoes » (the word is probably Slavic). The Scutarene tailors seem to have included Aromunians at some time in the past. And now compare the South-Albanian clothing nomenclature to its Aromunian counterpart: « sărica » « shark » « heavy overcoat made of fur »; « brut » « brucë », and also « flucăt » « flokatë », varieties of the former; « gioc » « xhokë » « woollen coat »; « țibune » « cibun » « woollen dress » (see A. Gjergji, « Analogies albano-roumaines dans les costumes populaires » in *Studia albanica* (1966) 1, p. 30).

« cappelletti », at the service of the King of Naples. The same family must have included among its members Cesare Masi, who founded Biancavilla in Sicily, whose coat of arms figures a horse (Alb. « mëz », Rum. « mânz » « colt ») [184]. In the battles for the conquest of Italy which started about the end of the 15th century, the Albanian stratiotes made themselves known and feared in fighting indiscriminately for the powers which hired them, Venice or Naples, France or Spain, the Emperor or the Pope. The stratiotes, who are referred to indifferently as Albanians, Greeks or Slavs (Schiavoni), came from various parts of the Balkan peninsula but were mostly Albanians as their names clearly show [185]. In later times they were referred to as Macedonians. In 1704, an infantry regiment called « Reggimento Real Macedone », composed only of Albanians, was organized as part of the Neapolitan army [186]. « Macedonian » is synonymous with « Albanian » in this appellative, according to a tradition already established by humanist writers and cultivated by Arbëresh scholars for good reason: the Italians called the Byzantine Arbëresh « Greci », meaning « heretics », on account of their Greek rite; the Arbëresh diplomatically called themselves Macedonians [187]. The Aromunian element among the Arbëresh had additional reason for upholding the Macedonian belonging: the bulk of the Aromunian population lived in various cities of Macedonia, a country still in the making which they expected to be their country, a Rumanian Macedonia. To this very day many Aromunians — including scholars such as Capidan — identify themselves as Macedo-Rumanians.

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[184] Biancavilla, one of the first Albanian settlements possessing a capitulation (25 January 1448), lost the Albanian language at a relatively early stage.

[185] See V. Valentini, « L'emigrazione stradiotica in Italia » in *Rivista d'Albania* 3 (1941). In a document of 23 March 1482, the Venetian Senate makes allowances for the following stratiotes who served the Republic faithfully: Micho Golemi, Neri Clementis, Martinus Barbacci, Joannes Condostaulus Culida, Barbi Manassi, Gynnus Sguri, Dominicus Daiza, Alexius Massi, Nicolaus Bua, Sarachinus Masi, Teodocius Varibombi, Gymni Garapsa, Demetrius Staci, Theodorus Dorandrichi, Elias Zanga, Andreas Cuzi, Lazarus Calengi (Sathas, *Documents* 7, p. 28).

[186] Count Giorgio Carafà, an Albanian born in Corfù, was made the commander of the regiment that was put together through the efforts of Strati Glica from Drimade (Dhërmí), in Chimara (Raoul Manselli, « Il reggimento albanese » in *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane* 1950-51 (XXXII): 142-58). Tajani (*Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 70) writes that, of a total of 684 men recruited, « 59 were dismissed because found to be not real Albanians, although coming from Albania ».

[187] The main work of Bishop Nicola Chetta (1742-1803), an ethnolinguistic manual in manuscript, is entitled « Tesoro di notizie su de' Macedoni ».

Raps. III 11 is about Gjika's daughter-in-law, whose husband has been killed by the Turks. In a note to this rhapsody, De Rada suggests the possibility that the heroine is related to the Gjika (Ghica) family from Veles (Küprülü). This princely family played a prominent role in Rumanian politics from the second half of the 17th century until 1859, when Rumania became a united kingdom. Elena Ghica, Princess Coltzof Massalsky with the pen name of Dora d'Istria, wrote many essays and books on ethnic as well as social subjects, including a relevant essay on Albanian folk songs. Another member of the same family, Albert Ghica, wrote a book on Albanian politics [188]. The Arbëresh linguist Camarda edited a panegyrical symposium, *A Dora d'Istria gli Albanesi,* while an Arbëresh librarian, B. Cecchetti, published a monograph, *Dora d'Istria e la poesia albanese.* De Rada shared in the general veneration for the erudite lady — he calls her the Mme de Staël of the South in the note mentioned above. *Skanderbegu* II 5, a long and perhaps the best canto in the whole epic, praises Imotoe de Gjika, an Albanian lady from Kavalla, who stabs the Turkish Pasha to defend her honor, then commits suicide. In Sathas' list of Albanian feudataries of the Morea, Radu appears together with several other family names in *-u* such as Balu, Lamu, Sulu (we also find Bali and Suli, but not Radi) [189].

The fraternization of Albanians and Aromunians is a constant in Balkan history. We have described their pre-medieval and medieval symbiosis, and we shall briefly survey their more recent relationship. The Albanian extraction in Rumania played a conspicuous part in the awakening of the Albanian national conscience during the last decades of the 19th century. It was after a meeting in Bucarest with the representatives of this extraction that Ismail Qemali proclaimed Albania's independence on 28 February 1912 [190]. The Albanian extraction in the United States, which played a major role in the struggle

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[188] *L'Albanie et la question de l'Orient* (1908).

[189] See note 70. — The 1603 capitulation of San Demetrio and Macchia mentions Guma Radi, Joanne Battista Radi and D'Andrea Rada among many other settlers such as Bellucci, Braile, Manes, Lopes, Ginezzi, Saraceno, Ligorio, Rollo, Ciurco, Strigaro, d'Amico, Chiassitelli, Pisarro, Stamati, Longo, Marini, Brunetto, Spata, Pod, d'Ambrosio, Matranga, Marchianò, Dramis (Pittito, « Gli Albanesi in Calabria » in *Archivio storico della Calabria* 3-4 (1914), p. 19). Most of these names are also found in Sathas' list (note 80), while Chiurco appears in the Venetian document about the Pamalioti mentioned in note 183. — A « noble Guma », a priest, is shown in *Serafina* B while celebrating mass.

[190] One of these leaders, Pandeli Evangjeli, was a Premier of Albania many times in the monarchist period.

for Albanian independence, was mostly composed of Albanians and albanized Aromunians from the Korçë region [191]. Almost all Tosk Albanian writers, heralds of Albanian nationalism, come from a zone interspersed with Aromunians [192]. G. Weigand was impressed by the amiable relations between Albanians and Aromunians during his pan-Aromunian tour in 1897-98 [193]. The main reason for their mutual sympathy was the threat of being assimilated by their stronger neighbors who had already achieved independence. Many Albanians and Aromunians who fought together with their fellow Greeks in the war of Greek independence [194] lived long enough to see Greek nationalism press for, and partly succeed in, the denationalization of these two ethnic groups. And when the chance for Albania to achieve independence grew, the Aromunians living together with the Albanians threw in their lot with them rather than with Serbs or Greeks, thus following a tradition which goes back, as we have seen, to ancient times.

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[191] Sotir Peci, the founder of the Albanian-American paper *Kombi* (The Nation) in 1906, was from Dardhë (Korçë), a village on the Greco-Macedonian border. Fan Noli, historian and writer, Primate of the Albanian Orthodox Church in the United States and a former Premier of Albania (1924), was born in Ibrik-Tepe, an Albanian village on the Turco-Greco-Bulgarian border.

[192] The brothers Naim and Sami, from Frashëri, the home of the Faršeriotes; Andon Chako (Çajupi), from Zagorí, on the northern extremity of the Pindus range; Aleks Drenova from the homonymous Bulgarian village near Korçë: Faik Konitza, from the homonymous town; Kristo Floqi, from Korçë: Lasgush Poradeci from Pogradeci on the Ohrid Sea. From Korçë and/or its adjacent zone come the collectors of folklore Eftim Mitko and Spiro Dine; the pioneers of education Petro Luarasi and Kristo Dako; the writer-martyr Kristo Negovani, the writer-fighter Mihal Grameno; the patriots Themistokli Gërmenji and Spiro Bellkameni.

[193] He quotes the saying « Vlach and Shqip[tar] vëlla[zër] » « Aromunians and Albanians [are] brothers » (*Die Aromunen* 1, p. ?).

[194] The Mainotes started the fight on 4 April 1821 by occupying Kalamas. Shortly after the Albanians of Hydra, Spetsa and Poros joined in (they supplied two thirds of the navy, according to Finlay, *A History of Greece* 6, p. 166), followed by the fiery Suliotes led by Botsaris and Tzavella. The Aromunians of the Agrafa canton rose in June 1821 (Finlay, *ibid.* p. 198). The role played by the Aromunian poet, Rigas Phereos, in preparing the Greek revolution, is well known. The statesman Coletti, one of the initiators of Greek nationalism, was Aromunian, and so were such war heroes as Andrutsu and Bucovala. — Yet, « Bucovala » is an Albanian name: « bukëvalë » from « bukë » and « valj » « oil » — Kristoforidhi (*Fjalor*) explains it as « buk'e pjekme zimë me ujë valë » (« baked) bread in boiling water ». And Constantine Andruzzi was, together with Botsaris and Tzavella, one of the commanders of the Albanian regiment organized by the French (1807-14), a person whom A. Boppe (*L'Albanie et Napoléon* (1914), p. 239) praises as « le type de l'albanais loyal et chevaleresque » — he was from Chimara.

8. *Ethnic Syncretism and Balkanology.*

Our quest for ethnic roots, following traces left in the Arbëresh literary tradition, has taken us on a topographic tour of a great part of the Balkan peninsula. Starting from Macchia in Calabria, and from there to Ioannina and Arta in Epirus and Coron and Nauplia in the Peloponnesus, we have been propelled northwards, along the Ionian-Adriatic coast, up to Cattaro in Montenegro. Then from Scutari, the old Illyrian capital, following Drin's course up to its source in the Ohrid Sea, and from there to the Vardar river in its course down to the Aegean Sea, we have reached another terminal, Salonika, the capital of Macedonia. *Milosao's* topography which includes Thessaly and Hydra is South-Balkanic rather than Albanian, while *Skanderbegu's* topography which reaches into such far-away countries as Anatolia and Spain is Mediterranean.

We have already mentioned the belief of most Arbëresh as well as foreign scholars in De Rada's time, when Albanian had not yet been found to belong to the Indo-European family of languages, that the Albanians were Semitic. De Rada's « levitic » heritage, as stated in the very beginning of *Autobiologia,* is based on that belief, which is in turn mediated by his Byzantine heritage. It is more difficult to explain his attraction for Spain. Some of his heroes have Spanish or Spanish-Saracen names, such as Gibraltare, Almanzore, Algazile, while one of his heroines is from Granada. He compares himself to the Cid Campeador in *Autobiologia,* and one of his sons was named Rodrigo. Spanish words such as « criate » « creada » « maid servant », « milordëz » « milordo » « gallant » (from Eng. « mylord »), « vantilje » « bandilla » « flag » occasionally occur in his works as well as in *Rapsodie.* They are probably a sign of snobism quite in keeping with a certain romantic taste for things oriental (Byron, Hugo). Yet De Rada's Spanish-Saracene names seem to be more than literary influence, and we recall that his only drama, *I Numidi* (*Sofonisba* in a second edition) has a Spanish-African setting. We can assume that he did not know of Bishop Rodrigo Ximenez de Rada (+ 1274) and his work, *Historia Gothica,* showing that the Dacians have influenced the history and genealogy of the Spanish people [195]. But it is quite possible that he read the *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* whose eighth book has a chapter on the adventures of Don Roger de Rada. Rada, or de Rada, is quite a frequent name among Spanish-speaking people [196].

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[195] M. Eliade, *De Xalmoxis a Genghis-Khan,* Payot, Paris, 1970, p. 78.

[196] *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana* (Barcelona, 1923) lists eight or nine persons by the name Rada, or De Rada, most of them ecclesiastics and writers.

Discovering his name in Spain might have been exciting for De Rada who needed hardly a spur to let his Pegasus go to the wildest flights. But we have repeatedly seen that De Rada's imagination follows an ethnic bent and his poetic works are grafted on tribal and family traditions. We recall that he uses « levitic » in relation to his ancestors while linking together Albanian and Hebrew. In his book on the Macedo-Rumanians, Capidan includes a reference to the Pindus' Vlachs by Benjamin Tudèle, a 12th century Jew: « They do not follow the Christian practices and call themselves with Jewish names — some think they are of Jewish origin » [197]. These Vlachs seem to have had Bogomilian leanings. The Bogomil heresy, which in the 13th century swept all Southern Europe, from the Bosphorus to the Pyrennees, coming from Bulgaria (Bulgarorum haeresis), took various names and forms in different countries (Patarini in Italy, Katharen in Germany, Albigeois in France etc.). Its center in the Balkan peninsula was Macedonia [198]. According to this Manichean doctrine, the world was created by Satan, the evil divinity opposed to God, the good divinity. Man's fall is the work of Satan, his creator. Therefore « the perfect » or « the elect » — as the Bogomils called themselves — must renounce this world and become ascetic. A corollary of this stance is that man has no free will. Now De Rada's conception of divinity is that of an angry god prone to punish rather than to pardon [199]. Before such a terrible god, man is almost hopeless, abandoned to his fate. Fate in the sense of doom is an all-pervading Radean concept [200]. The dualism which remains hidden in Girolamo comes to light in Camillo, his brother, who succeeded his father as Macchia's parish priest. His manuscript, « Pensieri sulla verità cristiana » (« Thoughts on Christian Truth ») contains the following passage: « Absolute unity is not the characteristic of the world. There is great division already in the innermost thoughts of our soul [...] Duality is thus stamped upon the world, deeply in the human soul, clearly also in the other parts of the creation, where night is found next to daylight, the heat to the cold [...] The Persians conceived of two divinities equally po-

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197 Capidan, *Les Macédo-Roumains* (1943), p.171.

198 Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren*, pp. 212-3.

199 In *Serafina* C III 6, Evoda, condemned to be burned at the stake, has a vision of Albania atoning for the sins of her people who have lost their Christian faith—Evoda herself has married a Turk. In *Skanderbegu* II 1, Bishop Filja suffers death as a punishment for a moment of vacillating faith.

200 In *Serafina* C alone, the word « fat » « fate » recurs twenty-two times with various meanings, including that of evil power.

werful » (Chapter 7) [201]. In Chapter 11, he speaks of a « perverse God » (« Dio perverso ») who is « our inner blind suspicious God making himself manifest in those who are avaricious or lovers of women ». Ascetism was in the family's blood — but ascetism is alien to the Albanian frame of mind.

After the unification of Spain in 1492, and following the repressive actions of the Catholic kingdom against its non-Catholic citizens, the Spanish Jews left to seek refuge in more liberal countries. Many of them settled in Macedonia which was at the time a Turkish dominion. It was these Jewish « Spanioles » (Sefaredim) who made Salonika, where they constituted the majority of the population in the following centuries, a first rate commercial city. Speaking of Durazzo which changed ruler thirty-one times in four centuries (992-1392), Šufflay calls the city « the Adriatic monad », a place where the Roman, Hellenic and Slavic influences met together [202]. Salonika could be called the Aegean monad, a city in which the Greeks and Greek Orthodox plebs of all Balkanic extractions lived side by side with their Moslem Turkish lords and the Jewish-Spanish merchants who made of that city the East-Mediterranean emporium. According to *Raps.* III 27, Haredin, dressed as « a Christian monk » in search of his daughter married to a Turk, « arrives at Salonika / when a fair was taking place there » (« më rrëvoi Salonik / Tek më bënej një markat »).

This is not to suggest that De Rada belonged to a Jewish-Spanish family later converted to the Greek Orthodox faith, but simply to emphasize *per absurdum* the complexity of the question we set about to solve. No satisfactory solution can be given to that question if we insist on pointing out ethnic differences. The solution lies in the opposite direction. This inquiry has shown, if anything, that a search for origins in the Balkan peninsula, a jungle of the most disparate ethnic tribes and populations, Indo-European as well as Uralo-Altaic, leads nowhere. Were we to abide strictly by the linguistic terms designating the various ethnic elements in the peninsula at various times,

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[201] « Non è poi l'unità assoluta il carattere del mondo. Già negl'interni pensieri del nostro animo è posta una grande divisione. Essi non si svolgono semplici e uni, ma spontaneamente deliberano fra due e scissi, finché l'una parte cade [sic] e l'altra si elevi. E' cosí la dualità stampata nel mondo; profondamente nell'animo umano, chiaramente anche nelle altre parti della creazione, ove la notte sta vicina al giorno, il caldo al freddo [...] Ai Persiani parve vedere due divinità egualmente possenti... » (« Pensieri sulla verità cristiana » in Biblioteca Civica, Cosenza, 1-7B 3044-3144).

[202] Šufflay, « Städte und Burgen » in *DAWW* (*ph*) 63 (1924), p. 5. A typical example is Karl Thopia's inscription in three languages, Latin, Greek and Serbian, in the Church of St. John in Elbasan.

we would soon find ourselves lost in an unending riddle in which the Albanians are Greek, the Greek Romans, the Slavs slaves, and so too the Vlachs. With respect to the latter, Jireček has this to say: « Vlach designates a Daco-Rumanian in Danubian Bulgaria and Serbia, a Macedo-Rumanian in Thrace and Macedonia, a non-Uniate Greek Orthodox in Croatia, a peasant of the mainland (Morlaccus) in Dalmatia, an Italian in Slovenia and Bohemia »[203]. And while it makes sense to distinguish between the Balkan languages and literatures and look for their characteristic national features, it makes just as much sense to lok for their common cultural elements, the result of millenia of peninsular coexistence. Sandfeld rightly saw in the superiority of Greek culture over the other Balkan cultures the main link to which the latter are attached especially through Greek liturgy which informs the civilization of the quasi-totality of the peninsula, with the exception of part of Northern Albania and the greater part of Croatia. Another common feature, although less pervasive than the former, is the Turkish heritage[204], an ensemble of habits, from culinary to linguistic — including canonic law for the Albanian and Bosnian moslems — which have molded the Balkan psyche to a greater or lesser degree. Miklosich's list of Turkish words in the Balkan languages shows that these words appear in three or four languages and at times in all of them[205]. Not less important are the contact points in folklore and ethnology. Rădulescu notes the names of ritual songs in various Balkan languages: Rum. *Colindă corindă,* Slav. *koleda,* Alb. *kolendra kullana,* Gr. *kalánta* (from Lat. *calenda*); Rum. *rusalii,* Bulg.

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[203] Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren,* p. 220.

[204] Çabej (« Der Beitrag des Albanischen zum Balkansprachbund » in *Studia albanica* (1967) 1, p. 171) writes: « Für die jüngste Entwicklungsphase der Balkansprachen ist der Einfluss des Türkischen wohl höher als bisher zu veranschlagen. Dieser ist nicht nur im Wortschatz umfassender und in der Suffixbildung bemerkbar, sondern auch in der Phraseologie viel reicher vertreten ». Schmaus speaks of « a levelling out of the subjetcs » on the part of their conquerors. He adds: « Gleichzeitig mit der osmanischen Herrschaft breitete sich ausser dem Lehenssystem auch der balkanisch-türkische Stadttyp vom Schwarzen Meer bis Mostar und Tirana aus, der in der Folge mit seiner Lebens- und Wohnweise, mit seiner materiellen Kultur und sogar mit seiner Mentalität auf die nähere Umgebung, und zwar nicht nur auf die Nichtmoslims ausstrahlte. Man darf den Einfluss dieser besonderen Form der Urbanität und überhaupt des Sozial- und Kulturprestiges des türkischen bzw. islamischen Elements nicht unterschätzen; ausser vielen Einzelheiten der materiellen Kultur legen vor allem die zahlreichen orientalischen Lehnwörter in den Balkansprachen davon Zeugnis ab » (« Volks- und Hochkultur in Südosteuropa » in *Gesammelte Slavistische und Balkanologische Abhandlungen* 2 (1973), p. 296).

[205] Miklosich, « Die Türkischen Elemente » in *DAWW (ph)* 34 (1884); 35 (1885).

rusalci, Alb. *llazore*, South-Slav. *Lazaruvané Lazarici Lazaricki;* Rum. *Lăzar Lăzărel* (from the evangelic name); Rum. *Paparudă Păpălugă Băbălugă*; Bulg. *Peperuda Petaluda*, Arom. *Pirpiruna*, Alb. *Peperona Rona*; Gr. *Piperià* (uncertain etym.); Southeast Slav. *dodole*, Rum. *duduloi duduloaie*, Alb. *dordolec*, Turk. *sorcole* [206].

Based on the common elements found in these and other disciplines, a comparative science, Balkanology, has gradually taken shape. Limiting our discussion to linguistics, we shall mention here the pioneering work done by Kopitar who first perceived that Albanian, Bulgarian and Rumanian have a common « Sprachform » while consisting of different « Sprachmaterien ». Miklosich and Schuchardt added a fourth language, Neo-Greek. Further studies showed that there has been reciprocal influence between these languages resulting in what Schuchardt called « mixture » (« Mischung ») and « levelling » (« Ausgleich »). Consequently, the concept of genetical kinship has been gradually making room for the concept of environmental kinship. A corollary of the new approach is the attenuation to the point of extinction of the old dualism between borrowings and aboriginal words. According to Tagliavini, the following are the most important contact points between the Balkan languages: almost complete disappearance of the infinitive, replaced by the subjunctive, or the indicative; formation of the future with the auxiliary *will*; frequent use of parataxis; idiomatic concordances; postposition of the determinate article in Albanian, Bulgarian and Rumanian; various phonetic and morphological concordances between two, or three, Balkan languages [207].

The final answer to the question is Balkan syncretism within the framework of East-Mediterranean and even Mediterranean civilization *tout court*. Rohlfs has shown that many Balkan concordances apply also to the dialects of Calabria and Apulia where conspicuous vestiges of Hellenism have survived. This is true not only for the lexicon of those dialects, but also for the grammar and phraseology. Rohlfs thinks that the use of the *passato remoto* as the only form of the past in Southern Italy is a reflex of the Greek aorist. The loss of the infinitive is common also to Calabrese and Pugliese in verbs expressing will or intention: θέλω νά πλαγιάσω « dua të flë » «vrea sa dorm » « hoću da spavam » « az iskam da spa » as well as « vogghiu mu dormu » (Calabria) and « vogghiu cu ddormu » (Apulia). The subs-

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[206] N. Rădulescu, « Unité et diversité dans la musique des coutumes périodiques du folklore des peuples sud-est européens » in *ZBal* 1-2 (1969-70): 118-24.
[207] Tagliavini, *La stratificazione del lessico*, pp. 71-73.

titution of the genitive for the dative, common to Albanian, Bulgarian and Rumanian, also occurs in the Aspromonte district in which Greek is still spoken: « di mè frati » = « of my brother » and « to my brother ». As an example of common phraseology, the question, « how old are you »? is particularly suggestive. This question, which in Italian sounds, « quanti anni hai »?, is heard in Calabria, « di quanti anni si? », in Terra d'Otranto, « di quant'anni sinti? », just as Greek πόσων χρονῶν εἶσαι , Albanian « sa vjeç je? », and Rumanian « câti ani esti? » [208].

We end by giving an example of linguistic syncretism in a sample of oral poetry. In *Raps.* III 2 two happy brides, one rich and the other poor, compete, the subject of competition being happiness. The rich lady enumerates her jewels and maid-servants, then points to her son. The poor bride stresses the beauty of her daughter, suggesting that she will capture the heart of the lady's son and take him away from his mother. Says the rich lady:

Kam u anak t'arta
Kurala e margaritare [,]
Kam vëluse e mundashëra
Ndër sënduqe; e kamaravet
Kam kriate çë m'gjegjënjën.

« I have golden necklaces, / corals and pearls, / fabrics of velvet and silk / in my chests, and in my rooms / I have maids who listen to my orders ». In this list of precious objects and holdings, not even one word is Albanian. Indeed, *mundash* (*mëndash*) comes, according to Meyer [209], from Lat. « metaxa » (Rum. « mătasă », Mac. « mătase », NGr. μετάξι); *artë* < ār from Lat. « aurum »; *kural* e *vëlus* from Ital. « corallo » e « velluto »; *margaritar* is Greek and Aromunian; *sënduk* is Greek in origin; *kamara* is Ital. « camera »; and *kriate* is Span. « creada ». The sample brings together words from languages spoken in all three Mediterranean peninsulae, Albanian providing the basis and the cement.

[208] Rohlfs, « Problèmes de linguistique balkanique » in *SAlb* (1967) 1.
[209] *Etymologisches Wörterbuch.*

II.

SHEPHERDS AND PEASANTS IN ALBANIAN LITERATURE

1. *Geo-Economic and Historical Background.*

Albania is a predominantly rural country. In 1971, 34% of the population lived in urban centers, 66% in villages [1]. The rural ratio used to be much higher in the past, more than 80% before World War I [2]. At that time the arable land occupied only 9% of the total area, the rest being covered by forests (33%), pasture (25%), and unproductive land of various sorts (33%) [3]. These figures help to explain why Albania, with an area of 11,097 square miles (28,748 km^2), approximately the size of Maryland, had a population of little more than a million in 1930, with an average population density of 34.8 per square kilometer, the lowest among the East European contries [4].

The bulk of the population lived in the lowlands along the Adriatic coast and the rest was scattered on mountain valleys and highlands that constituted the largest part of the country. Albania is a mountainous country, 70% of its area lying above the 1000-foot contour line [5]. Only its coastal zone, not including it southernmost point, is lowland of which a considerable part was covered by malaria-breeding marshes until recently. The many rivers flowing into the Adriatic Sea have carved valleys where agriculture can prosper. Northern Albania, however, where a limestone range, the Dinaric Alps, reaches heights above 8,000 feet, is all mountainous, except for the narrov Drin valley and the Zadrimë plain. Because of this topography, Northern Albania has been an almost impenetrable region for centuries. Its pastoral mode of life and the tribal organization regulated by a medieval customary code gave rise to an original culture that has attracted students of various anthropological disciplines. A similar pattern of life and culture is found in the rugged region of Kurvelesh

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[1] *Vjetari statistikor i Republikës Popullore të Shqipërisë: 1973*, p. 43.

[2] *Albania* (ed. Skendi), 1958, p. 148.

[3] M. Michelangeli, *Il problema forestale albanese* (1940): « Land Use 1940, Table 4 ».

[4] *Albania*, p. 52.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

situated North-West of the Vjosë river, before the latter reaches the Myzeqe plain.

The history of Albania is, for the most part, that of the shepherds and peasants inhabiting the country. According to Georg Stadtmüller, the Slavic invasion in the 6th century found the ancestors of the Albanians entrenched in the Mat canton where Roman influence had been unable to penetrate [6]. When the Bulgarian empire came to an end in the 11th century, the Albanian shepherds began expanding in successive waves, pushing forward towards the Serbian regions of Metohia and Kosovo in the North and reaching as far as the Peloponnesus and the Aegean island in the South. Milan Šufflay sees the Albanian tribes emerging in the 11th century from a zone bounded by the rivers Mat and Vjosë as the « Albanian core » [7]. According to the Croatian historian, the population of the coastal cities was heterogenous, and the culture was either predominantly Roman in the North, or essentially Byzantine in the South [8]. He observes that one of the names by which the Albanians called themselves in the middle Ages is *malok* « mountaineer » (corrupted to « pamaliot » by Venetian writers) [9].

Fan Noli interprets the Albanian resistance to the Turks under the leadership of Scanderbeg as a successful guerilla war waged by free peasants intolerant of any kind of servitude [10]. The Scutarene humanist Marinus Barletius, who first recorded that resistance [11], depicts the Albanians as freedom fighters. It is not a mere coincidence that the first Albanian written document, a Catholic formula of baptism, goes back to the Scanderbeg period. Writing more than a century after Barletius, Frano Bardhi (Franciscus Blancus) notes in his booklet on Scanderbeg that the Albanians kept his memory alive in songs devoted to him and his fellows [12]. The period which witnessed the dawning of national consciousness amidst the pangs of a war for liberation also saw literature and folklore forming around the

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[6] *Forschungen,* p. 28-30.

[7] *Srbi i Arbanasi,* chap. 20.

[8] Šufflay points out the symbiosis of Albanian and Aromunian (Vlach) shepherds with Serbian soil-tillers in Northern Albania. According to him, the first Albanian dynasty, the Balshas, were of Vlach origin, (*Srbi i Arbanasi,* chap. 32), and a symbiosis of Albanian and Aromunian shepherds in the Pindus region called Megale Vlachia occurred in the 14th century.

[9] « Provijest sjevernih Arbanasa », chap. 3 in *ArhASJE* 2 (1924).

[10] *George Castrioti* (1947), pp. 8, 73.

[11] *De vita* [...] *Georgii Castriota* (1537).

[12] *Georgius Castriotus Epirensis, vulgo Scanderbeg* [...] Venetis, 1636, pp. 70, 73-4.

figure of Scanderbeg: panegyrical history and epic songs as well as a tradition of jurisdictional rulings attributed to the national hero. These rules, known as the Canon of Scanderbeg, were current in the zones under his dominion (Mat and Dibër), paralleling the other traditional but better known Canon of Lekë Dukagjini.

The occupation of Albania by the Turks changed the socio-economic picture. The system of *timars*, concessions by the state of non-hereditary fiefs to chieftains and notables in compensation for the military service of the men under their jurisdiction, was a first step towards servitude. The evolution of *timars* into *çifliks*, estates owned by landlords, turned the tenant farmers into serfs. The resistance of the Albanian free peasants to the Turks, which started before Scanderbeg and continued after his death, was mostly due to the new socio-economic system introduced by the Turks in the form of military fiefs. Religion was an additional factor, the rebellious zones, especially Dukagjin and Himarë, holding fast to their Christian faith, whether Roman or Byzantine. In Northern Albania where pastoral life continued its course and where the common ownership of pasture land and forests was part of the institutions holding together the tribal-patriarchal system, Turkish rule was never total. The various attempts to subdue the highlanders through institutions such as that of the *bajraktar* (« flag-bearer ») and *bylykbash* (« commander of a battalion »), intended to weaken tribal cohesion and undermine the customary law, had only limited impact. The Albanian highlanders preserved a measure of the freedom forfeited by the rayah peasants of the plains.

But Turkish rule was sufficiently successful in the urban centers and their adjacent zones to hold Albania for more than four centuries. Slowly but steadily, Islam drove Christianity away, forcing upon the population an alien civilization, other mores and customs. Language and literature were affected as well and Albanian was written not only in Roman and Greek but also in Arabic alphabet. Albanian Moslems distinguished themselves as Turkish writers while others used a vocabulary which is almost as much Turkish-Arabic as Albanian. Nor was the Turkish influence on the language limited to Moslem writers alone; the Catholic clergy (E. Radoja, P. Babi) also made use of this contaminated language in their doctrinal works. Turkish influence was profound in other aspects of civilization: in the way of cooking and dressing (Catholic men would wear a « fez », Catholic women *branavekë*. large pants of oriental fashion), in the style of house building, in the kind of furniture and houseware, and even in the mode of singing and instrument playing (« aheng »). An oriental

meter, the *beyt*, a distich of 14-16 syllables, was used in satirical and epic verse as well as in love poems for boys (« dilbers »), a form of love unknown in rural milieus.

One is then entitled to consider as typically Albanian only the rural culture, especially where it informs the life of villages situated relatively far from urban centers. Considering that the latter have been invariably located on the coast or near it — Tivar (Antivari), Ulćin (Dulcigno), Shkodër (Scutari), Krujë (Croya), Durrës (Durazzo), Berat, Vlorë (Valona) — we can speak of a coastal civilization, a mixture of Byzantine and Ottoman elements in the South, Venetian and Ottoman elements in the North, a civilization based on trade and administration, as distinct from the native inland culture based on cattle-raising and, to a lesser degree, on agriculture. The original achievements of the Albanian mind belong to this second category: the customary law and oral epic poetry. Albanian history is also mainly that of Albanian shepherds and peasants, from medieval times when they left the staff and the hoe for the spear and the sword, invading and colonizing Epirus and Thessaly, until the quite recent past when they rose against foreign occupation and social exploitation. The 1847 jacquerie, that protested against governmental reforms (*Tanzimat*) including a system of individual taxation and regular military service, was the work of Moslem Lab shepherds and Orthodox Tosk peasants (rayahs). Gheg mountaineers, Catholic and Moslem, rose in arms against Montenegro's annexation of Albanian territories decided by the Congress of Berlin in 1878. The 1910-12 insurrections of the highlanders of Kosovo and Dukagjin laid the ground for the proclamation of independence in 1912. In 1920, an army of volunteers largely composed of Lab shepherds and peasants attacked the Italian army occupying Valona and freed the city. Finally, the antifascist movement of national liberation during World War II, leading to the establishment of a communist-dominated government in November 1944, was essentially another peasants' war prompted by nationalist pride (recovery of independence) as well as by social revendications (possession of land). The two main forces propelling the war of liberation were the warlike shepherds of Kurvelesh on the one hand and, on the other, the poor peasants of Central and Southern Albania, including those of Muzeqe, the most exploited of all.

When Albania became independent in 1912, it was the most backward country in Europe and remained so until the end of World War II. Since then, however, things have changed. In 1971, industry (including mining, construction, transportation and commerce) provided 63.6 % of the national income as against 36.4 % from agriculture

and forestry [13]. The population which numbered about a million in 1930 had already doubled in 1968 while illiteracy which stood at the figure of 93 % at the end of World War II was wiped out within the first decade following the war [14]. At the end of World War II, only three cities, including the capital, had over 20,000 inhabitants. In 1971, Tirana numbered 174,000 inhabitants, while three other cities had a population of over 50,000 and two of over 40,000 [15]. Industrial development and urbanism have modified the situation in the country which, however, continues to be mainly agricultural. But Albania is no longer a pastoral country as in the past. The collectivization drive promoted by the Albanian [Communist] Party of Labor has done away with the economic basis and means of livelihood characterizing the old pastoral tribal system. The latter, which had already begun to disintegrate with Albania's constitution as an independent state with a central monarchic government, fell to pieces under the Party's successive blows. The agrarian reform promulgated in 1945 made all forests and pastures the property of the state. The land belonging to persons who had other sources of income was expropriated without compensation [16]. A subsequent law in 1946 expropriated orchards, vineyards and olive groves; state farms patterned after the Soviet sovkozes were created. Shortly afferwards, the Party started the collectivization drive, with the objective of creating collective farms modelled on the Soviet kolkhozes. At the same time state-owned dairy collectives were established. The collectivization drive went rather slowly during the first decade (1945-55) because of the peasants' resistance, but gained momentum during the second decade. Today, thirty years after the agrarian reform, Albania is a 98 % collectivized socialist country. The agricultural area (arable land, forests and pastures), 84.9 % of the total area, is almost the same as previously: 1,224,50z ha in 1971 vs. 1,180,000 ha in 1938. But while forest land has slightly decreased, 1,216,000 ha (42.3 %) vs. 1,307,700 ha, arable land has more than doubled, 607,700 ha (21.1 %) vs. 292,100 ha, as a result of land reclamation and deforestation. On the other hand, pasture land has

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[13] *Vjetori statistikor: 1973,* p. 141.

[14] *Zëri i popullit,* March 7, 1974 (editorial).

[15] *Vjetori statistikor: 1973,* p. 26.

[16] Landowners with no other sources of income were allowed to retain forty hectares of land (one hectare is about two and half acres) of which two hectares had to be pasture land, under the condition that they work the land themselves. The confiscated land was distributed in equal lots of five hectares per family to poor or landless peasants with additional allotments for larger families, or extended families including married sons (*Albania, op. cit.,* p. 158).

considerably decreased, 616,800 ha (21.5 %) vs. 887,900 ha. The ratio between shepherds and peasants has shifted in favor of the latter. Albania is no longer a pastoral country and the Albanian shepherd carrying a rifle more often than a staff, a frequent type in Albanian romantic literature, is today a fading memory.

2. *City versus Country and Literature versus Folklore.*

An ethnic group of shepherds and peasants may produce a folklore, but not necessarily a literature. The latter, an urban or urbanized product, is naturally city-oriented and tends to dispense with the picture of the countryside. In the case of Albanian literature, however, specific conditions have contributed to its having a largely rural content and character.

a) Most Albanian authors are of rural origin, though not necessarily of humble birth. The Catholic authors of the 16th and 17th centuries were peasants who had either received some education from local priests (Buzuku and Budi), or had been students of the Propaganda Fide (Bardhi and Bogdani). Of the two major Tosk Moslem poets of the 18th century, Zyko Kamberi and Nezim Frakulla, the former was a peasant by both birth and choice, while the latter, a city dweller, preserved little of his rural origin as implied by his name, that of a village. The 18th and 19th century Italo-Albanian (Arbëresh) authors — Figlia, Variboba, De Rada, Santori, Serembe, Straticò, Serembe, Dara, Schirò — were all rural people, though some of them boasted noble origins. Tosk literature of the period of national awakening is the work of exiles born either to impoverished timariotes (the brothers Frashëri, Naim and Sami) and peasants enriched by trade (Çajupi), or to small farmers (Noli, Asdren). And while Gheg authors of the same period were townsmen (Pashko Vasa, Shiroka, Mjeda, Gurakuqi, Mosi, Grameno), the outstanding author of the time, Fishta, was born a humble peasant. The literature of the period between the two world wars (1912-44) is, on the contrary, overwhelmingly bourgeois or petit-bourgeois (Floqi, Asllani, Koliqi, Poradeci, Kuteli, Haxhiademi, Kokona, M. Kokolari, Haki), the peasant contribution being slim (Spasse). Contemporary literature is the product of urban writers (Shuteriqi, Siliqi, Gjata, Paçrami, Kadare) as well as writers of peasant origin (Marko, Çaci, Prifti, Agolli; Rela, Shkreli; Camaj).

b) We must add that a clear distinction between city and countryside has never existed in Albania. Because industry is a very

recent development [17], and also because of the cultural backwardness of the nation (no university, no museums and art galleries, no concert halls), cities were more like big villages. Most houses had orchards and vegetable gardens, and it was customary for families to keep a cow or a couple of sheep or goats. Cattle were usually housed in a partition of the ground floor, living under the same roof as the household [18]. Horses and donkeys, carts pulled by oxen, carrying vegetables, charcoal or timber, could be seen on market days in the principal streets of the cities, including the boulevards of the capital. In his satirical poem, *Babatasi's Donkey* (1923), Fishta has the Director of the National Museum ride his donkey to his office. Today the Director of the National Museum would probably ride a motorcycle. The collectivization of agriculture and the growth of industry have greatly changed the aspects of the cities. The change has been accomplished by blurring the distinctions between city and countryside, a consequence of the Party's determined policy to abolish the distance between the two. New roads and railroads, radios owned by rural families and television sets available at houses of culture in villages, frequent cultural expeditions to the countryside in the form of film and theatrical shows, folk dance and music, these and similar means have considerably narrowed the disparities between city and countryside. The osmosis between the two has been facilitated by the rigid ethics of communism. For although the population of towns has considerably increased, the characteristic features of modern city life — amusements and crime, automobiles and pollution, residential areas and slum quarters — are missing from Albanian cities, as are thé characteristic features of traditional peasant life in the countryside — attachment to the soil, strong feeling of ownership, persistence of old-fashioned habits.

c) A distinctive aspect of Albanian literature is its close relationship with folklore. Italo-Albanian literature is a direct outgrowth of the latter, a folkloric literature par excellence. And many romantic poets, including the most representative ones, Frashëri and Fishta, wrote works that develop themes of oral poetry and tradition, heavily relying on folk stylistic patterns, including folk metrics. Now folklore

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[17] It was non-existent until 1925, and by 1940 the country's industry consisted of thirteen electric generating stations, several sawmills and power mills, two olive oil extracting plants, six cigarette manufacturing plants, one brewery, one cement factory and a few more factories producing various items (*Ibid.*, p. 190).

[18] In Scutari, for exemple, a house would include a separate storage room for the hay (*kulla e sanës*), the usual fodder for cows.

is of course a rural as well as urban product. In the case in question, however, because of the geo-economic and historical factors already mentioned, rural folklore overshadows urban folklore. The former is at the basis of various representative literary works, from *Milosao* to *The Highland Lute*, from *Nita* to *Djella*, from *The General of the Dead Army* to *The Dead River*. The relationship between literature and folklore reflects the socio-economic relationship between city and countryside, involving the former's dependence on the latter. It is as if urban literature sought its title of legitimacy from rural folklore. Thus a typically bourgeois writer such as Koliqi published a collection of short stories, *Mountain Shadows*, before moving on to his more representative work, *Merchant of Flags*, portraying city life. And Sejfulla Malëshova, one of the founding fathers of Albanian communism, includes in his proletarian *Poems* one on the death of the Bilbil brothers, peasant bandits celebrated in a Tosk folk song. Albanian literature is defined by its ambivalent attitude towards the legacy-tutorship of folklore, from which it often breaks loose and to which it invariably returns. This is as true for the romantic literature of the pre-independence period as it is for the socialist literature of today. Both smell strongly of folklore, the difference being that the natural relationship between folklore and culture corresponding to the socio-economic continuity between countryside and city in the past has been replaced by the forced kinship resulting from the invasion by industry of the rural milieu. Folklore is processed into literary works pretty much as raw material is manufactured into industrial products. In reading the folkloric episodes that abound in contemporary literature, one is often left with the taste of a tomato grown in a hothouse, or of wine made by adding pigment to alcohol mixed with water.

3. *Periods and Types.*

Since the topic of this essay cuts across the whole of Albanian literature even though our objective is not to write a history of that literature, we have selected a format and approach which allow us to dwell on the subject long enough to cover it while avoiding prolixity and dispersion. This has been done by (a) dividing our study in two parts, the second of which is treated separately after the essay on Migjeni. The division is required for objective reasons already mentioned: the collectivized peasant of the socialist period has little or nothing in common with the peasant of the past, while the traditional shepherd is now only a memory. Implicit in this distinction are typological considerations. For (b) whereas the collectivized pea-

sant of the socialist period is a uniform type, the traditional peasant of the presocialist period presents many facets, which are contingent on his social condition and occupation. A peasant in the past could be richer or poorer, free or a serf; he could work at home or take the road of exile, be a bandit or a mendicant dervish. These and other types are the product of specific historical conditions dependent on geography and economy, ethos and ethnos, administration and religion. We have approached them within the context of literary sets defined by a combination of those social factors. And (c) we have arranged these literary sets within the larger framework of the socio-historical periodization of Albanian literature as explained in the « Foreword ». This has been done to help the reader obtain a general idea of the development of Albanian literature, the range of our topic being almost coextensive with the latter.

The result has been a description of rural types characterizing some literary sets: the sharecropper and the bandit in Italo-Albanian literature; the warrior shepherd, the warrior priest and the amazon in the Gheg Catholic tradition; the peasant dervish in the Tosk Moslem tradition; the poor paesant and the haiduk in democratic and populistic writers; the rayah and the kolkhoznik in socialist literature. All these types except the last two have ceased to exist, leaving their traces in folklore and literature, especially where they are grafted upon oral traditions. Each literary set has its own preferred types which we have tried to individuate through consideration of single works. But since this essay only surveys Albanian literature, the characteristic types have been no more than sketched, a thorough examination of them lying outside the scope of this survey.

In this essay we consider the part of Albanian literature from the origins to World War II, the socialist period being examined in the fourth and last section of this book. We shall return there to the question, and not merely because socialist Albania remains an agricultural country, though of a new type, in spite of the Party's enormous effort to speed up its industrialization. Indeed the part of socialist literature which is truly relevant, both from an artistic and sociological point of view, remains, significantly enough, circumscribed by country life and reflects the new socio-economic relationships following the collectivization of the land. The literature of factories and workshops, dam-building and railroad construction, is disappointingly shallow, which is largely due to the official prescription to portray these none-too exciting and rather parochial events on an epic scale and in grandiloquent jargon.

4. *Sharecroppers and Bandits in Calabro-Albanian Literature.*

The essay on the Arbëresh literary tradition has sufficiently dwelled on the conditions of the Italo-Albanian peasantry and their class differentiations. We now proceed to consider the literary reflections of those conditions in the works of three Calabro-Albanian writers: Variboba, De Rada and Santori. Two types are dominant in their works: the sharecropper and the bandit.

Writing on the social status of the Italo-Albanians when they first settled in Italy, Tajani compares them to the medieval *aldii,* an intermediate class between serfs and free men [19]. These people who fled their pastures and fields in Albania, Epirus and the Morea not to bow to the Turks, were not happy to find themselves sharecroppers in the baronial estates of the Kingdom of Naples. The authorities which had given asylum to them had to comply at the beginning with their reluctance to give up their weapons, which they eventually used to make a living without working hard. Preying on strangers was part of their customs, and this went on in Northern Albania until than half a century ago. Describing the Albanian Suliotes in Epirus, F.C. Pouqueville writes that they considered « manual work as undignified because of their lofty origin », preferring the profession of arms and banditry [20]. A. L. Castellan says practically the same when writing on the Albanians in the Morea [21]. Such customs and habits led easily to the banditry of their descendants in Southern Italy. They did not introduce it: banditry had been endemic in Calabria, and originated in the landlords' inhuman treatment of their serfs. The history of the Calabro-Albanians is a series of violent outbursts against baronial arrogance and exploitation. We shall mention here a few cases that occurred in the first decades of the 19th century. During the period 1809-11, when banditry broke loose in the Kingdom of Naples, a woman from the Arbëresh village of San Demetrio, Maria Buscia Todaro, roamed the countryside for nine months disguised as a man, carrying a gun, in company with the chief bandit Fridizza [22]. The notorious band of the Vardarelli brothers, which was finally

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[19] *Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 16. — The *aldii* were subjects to the Longobard conquerors, whose lands they cuttivated (*terrae aldiariciae*).

[20] *Voyage en Morée, à Constantinople, en Albanie* (1805), Vol. I, Book 5, Chap. 2.

[21] *Lettres sur la Morée* (1808), p. 71.

[22] U. Caldora, *Calabria napoleonica* (1960), note. p. 435. — Another Albanian bandit of this time was Giovanni Nicola Cassiani from Vaccarizzo (*ibid.*).

destroyed in the Arbëresh village of Ururi in 1818 [23], included several Italo-Albanians from the Arbëresh villages of Molise, which a 19th century Italian economist, G. Palmieri, describes as « infamous nests of bandits and smugglers » [24].

We should not expect *The Life of the Virgin* (1762), the first artistic work of Albanian literature, to say much of the plight of the Arbëresh shepherds and peasants in Calabria. Giulio Variboba, the author, was a Byzantine priest, a former professor at the Collegio Corsini in San Benedetto Ullano, an institution founded to provide spiritual leadership for the followers of the Greek rite in Italy, mostly Arbëresh. *The Life of the Virgin* is a sequence of episodes illustrating St. Mary's life as well as that of Jesus. The episodes are interspersed with doctrinal poems which reveal the author as a partisan of the Roman Church. Most of these poems were written for a congregation of women, St. Mary's Daughters, which was meant to be instrumental in the conversion of the predominantly Byzantine population of the poet's native village Mbuzat (San Giorgio) to Catholicism. The work best illustrates how literature perpetuates folklore without interruption and deviation. In one of the poems, « Awakening Song », a procession of shepherds visits the infant God. They come — Variboba calls them by their native names — with bagpipes and ocarinas and many gifts: one brings a lamb, another a ram, a third a kid and the next a goat. The poorer ones offer game, honey, cheese — four kinds of it are mentioned, including an Arbëresh specialty called *manure*. Then a group of Mbuzatiote women come singing *parambote*, the Arbëresh equivalent of the Italian *stornello*. Their gifts are most varied, and range from mammals (a cow, a goat) to birds (a rooster, a duck, a capon; a wild pigeon, a peacock); from homemade *pasta* and an Albanian pasty, *lakruar*, to garden vegetables (broccoli, mustard greens) and fruits (chestnuts, raisins); from various homespun fabrics and articles of clothing (a bib, diapers, a silken shirt) to artifacts such as clogs, a little cross, and a *kezë*, a richly embroidered cap that the Arbëresh women wear in festivities — this one a gift to the Madonna.

The religious episodes often turn into humorous scenes, with Mary and Joseph cast in the role of simple-minded country folks, utterly insensitive to spiritual, let alone mystical, overtones. The poem teems with details such as that of Joseph circumcising the son of

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[23] F. Tajani, *Istorie albanesi* 4, p. 102-4.

[24] *La Ricchezza delle nazioni*, chap. 9 — quoted by A. Masci, *Sull'origine* (1807), p. 76.

God who cannot help emitting an « ouch! », or Mary « in labor looking like a hedgehog », or Jesus falling in love with a « devotee », one of Mary's Daughters, who, however, prefers another, thus provoking Jesus' outburst: « Enflamed he struck at the harlot » — the Albanian phrase for « struck », « i raa me door », is idiomatic for masturbation [25]. A down-to-earth humor in the very tradition of carnavalesque and burlesque folk songs enlivens the narrative. We quote excerpts from the dialogue between Mary and the archangel Gabriel [26]:

. . . « U jam' e virgjër.
Si një e virgjër mund jeet ëmm'?
Këjo mbashát nëng' ësht urát,
Për një të virgjër ëë mëë se nëmm' ».

Ëngjëli folji: « Jo, se Zotiin
Tek vete hiin nëng' e dënon;
Virgjinitaten e puritaten
Tek mëë e gjëën, mëë e ngjaron.

Si passiqirën tek dieli hiin,
Ai nëng' e nxiin, e dritëson.
Mos kijë pahuur, mos kijë timuur:
Vet Shpirti Shëjt vjen e të mbjon ».

« Puru ci luljen të me salvonj »,
Tha këjo zonj, « u jam kutiend
Si ai ti deet, si ai ta theet,
Sempre jam prontu edhe njëmend ».

. . . « I am a virgin.
How can a virgin be a mother?
This message is no blessing at all,
rather it's a curse to me, a virgin ».

Said the angel: « Not so. Our Lord
does not lay waste when he steps in.
The more he finds virginity and chastity,
the brighter he makes them look.

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[25] « Già erdhi Shën Bambini e na mbitaar », line 13.

[26] Quotes are from a microfilmed copy of a photostatic copy of *Gjella* in the Grottaferrata Library (the texts have been transliterated in standard Albanian; punctuation has been occasionally added).

Just as when the sun hits a mirror,
which is brightened, not darkened thereby.
Therefore have neither worry nor fear,
the Holy Ghost himself will cover you'!

« Provided that he saves my flower »,
said Our Lady, « I am quite willing
to comply with his wishes and ready
to do his bidding ».

No less puzzled by the news is Joseph:

« Ajo si nj'ëngjel ësht oneste,
Ëë modeste, u vet e dii.
Ma se ëë gatith, e se nanith
Vjen t'e bëënj, e shoh me sii ».
. . . . . .

« Si kaa të më jeet sot kii latin?
E virgjër sinn edhe me baarr!
Sikuur një grua kaa një krua
Ujë e ziarm bashk' të marr ».

« She is chaste like an angel,
and modest too, I know.
Yet she is about to give birth,
I can tell by looking at her »!
. . . . . .
« And how to explain this riddle?
She is virgin, and pregnant too!
It's as if a woman should fetch
both water and fire from a spring ».

The Life of the Virgin includes other poems in which all reverence for religion is discarded and the peasants voice their protest at being cheated by the church which sides with the rich and the powerful. This is how a pious peasant woman replies to the Virgin when she, appearing to her in a dream, enjoins her to build a church [27]:

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[27] In « Our Lady of the Good Counsel », p. 179. — According to a legend, the Madonna of Scutari fled from the city occupied by the Turks and settled in Genazzano, a village near Rome.

Ajo Petruccia u mbii, për këtë kumënd çë pat;
I që sikuur ndër sii ju shkreh një shkuptàt:
« Ndëljem, o e Shën Mërij, me çë t'e bënj, o Zonj'?
Ti già mëë miir e dii si jam u undër bësonj'!.
« Pensieri kush e kaa? », streksi e Shën Mëria.
« Ti mua për çë më mbaa? Vinj u, ëë bëër shpia »!
Mbjatu një qish' të gjëër zuu fiil sa s'kish të rëën'.
Paisant thann': « Gjëë veer çë piu, kjo pacc' bëën »!

Petruccia froze at hearing this command,
as if she had received a gunshot in her face.
« Excuse me, Saint Mary, with what am I going to build it?
You know well that I am poor ».
« You need not worry »! replied Saint Mary.
« Am I nothing to you then? It's enough that I appear, and
the temple is built »!
And right off she began erecting a church large and solid.
The villagers said: « She must be drunk, she's acting
foolishly »!

Even more telling in this respect is a prayer to the Madonna entitled « The Great Queen », in which she is portrayed as a great lady who, seated on her heavenly throne, no longer cares for her « family », the poor and the hungry on earth:

Rexhin e madhe çë ndër qiel jee,
Gjith pissën përmist ndër këmb' e mbaa.
Sot pater-terni të dish' për ree,
Si ëmm'i biri për xerku të kaa.
E Shpirti Shëjt, si pëlumbi i ljee,
U ngre e fjuturoi, mbë tij raa.
Kurorën si rexhin mbë krie kee,
Vinxhove ndër fërtann burra e graa.
Fëmiljën ti kultò se ku e ljee,
Ruaj se rii mbë derët e të qaa.
Tij ti truhet çë putencje kee,
Gjegjë per vita tua si u vuu e qaa.
Oj mëmm', të duket miir? Ti ndër haree,
Na ndër penn e turmende, e huaje saa.
Ti ndë kumbit shalaar, neve na ljee
Të vdessëm uri si qenni çë raa.
Ah, ndëë vërteta se për biljë na kee,
Ndëëna edhe neve ti assi çë haa!

Great Queen who are in heaven,
with hell beneath your feet,
now you are God's daughter-in-law,
and his son hugs you like a mother.
The Holy Ghost as a gentle dove
rose and flew and fell upon you.
A queen's crown you wear on your head,
chosen over all men and women for your sorrows.
Remember where you left your family,
look how they stand at the door crying!
They turn to you who have power;
listen to them imploring you to save them!
O mother, does it seem right to you that you be happy,
while we toil and suffer and have so many debts?
You revel in banquets while you let us
starve to death like dogs!
If it's true that we are your sons,
give us a share of your food!

The journey of the holy family to Egypt is described with the Albanian exodus in mind, the recurrent epithets being « exiles » (*nasil*), « poor » (*te nëmur*), « bandit » (*bandit*). The last one occurs four times, the synonymous « robber » (*later*) twice in the span of fourteen quatrains. Mary is shown trembling at the thought that Jesus might meet a « bandit's death » and immediately afterwards a band of robbers (*furgjudikët*) attacks the holy family. But one of them (Variboba identifies him as « the good thief », *latër i miir*, of the Christian tradition), impressed by the « beauty » of the divine infant, « gives alms » to the parents, instead of robbing them — the author has inserted in the sacred story the motif of the good bandit who preys on the rich while helping the poor. And it is significant that in the concluding poem Christ is addressed as one who was « born in the manger » and who «died on the cross together with the good thief » (« vëdiqe pstaj mbi kriq me bonlatruun »).

Girolamo De Rada's masterpiece, *Songs of Milosao* (1836), was prompted, the author tells us, by his love for a peasant woman, the daughter of the De Rada family's herdsman. He conceived the poem after graduating from college, while collecting Arbëresh folk songs in his native village Macchia and other Arbëresh villages in the Cosenza region. He first intertwined the folk songs with his own imitations of them, and then wrote an imaginary sequel to the love poems

he had been composing for the beautiful shepherdess [28]. Although De Rada gives his romance a setting of fantasy, 15th century Scutari, and makes his hero the son of the prince of Scutari, the real setting, his own village and the Calabro-Albanian rural milieu with its customs and ways of life, emanates from every canto. « The characters are villagers, shepherds and peasants, portrayed in their daily occupations. Boys play in the meadows, girls dance in the village squares, lovers meet at the fountain or at street corners, men till the soil or tend herds, mothers sing their children to sleep, women work in the vineyeards and olive groves and at home make bread, weave and embroider » [29].

Canto 9 tells of the hero's visit to an old shepherd in whose fold he spends the night, waiting for morning so that he may intercept his girl as she brings food to her father and brothers working in the fields. In Canto 6 the hero, musing sadly about his parents' opposition to his marrying the girl, wonders whether he should not elope with her and live a poor peasant's life in an « abandoned cabin ». This romantic motif is preceded in the text by a social one alluding to the arrogance of the gentry, their « high-born lads drumming loudly », a reminder to the Arbëresh peasants of their status as subjects to the Calabrian lords. Here is the canto:

Raa bora ndë dejtit
e më sbardhi vudhëvet
krahët e shqittëzës.
Gjumi mua më ljodhënith,
kurmi vette tue m'u reshtur,
porsi gruas te Maarbelja
mbrëmanet i reshtjet
shtrush'i taraftivet,
ljehëmii e qenëvet
mbii Miljonët, sheh se shuhet
zjarri e dhezet vreshtavet,
gjeel edhe çë së qëloi.

O vasha kriekështëënj
butt shtraan të m'uljënej,
pra të vehej ture tjeerr

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[28] See A. Pipa, « The Genesis of *Milosao* » in *Revue des études sud-est européennes* (1973) 4.

[29] A. Pipa, « *Milosao*: a Popular and Classical 'Lyrical Romance' » in *Comparative Literature Studies* 3 (1969), p. 339.

gjims ndë t'errët e te dritta
të ljëren këntimëthin!
Dee të harroja se te bora
biren kronjet e të mbjeljat
këtgjeel çë na ruanjën;
se të biljt e zonjavet
Samrankat me tumpariin
gjëmojën te vresht'e laarg,
i thoon: na ju ruami.

Më qëlonej tue fjantaksur
se të përdorëm ashtu posht
vejm, se shpiit e njerëzet
na fanepsëjin mbë të haraksur,
na ljërejin iljëzit.
Ndo se kalji më ljëshonej,
ikën ndë një ljeeh graa
gjith të shprishura, ajo vet
zij tërkuzën të përtrolëm,
kurm e i bukkur i njeriut
siit i ruanej, e m'e butten,
të dërsiturin stomahë
më shinej me skemantiilj,
e kuqe, se më e shihin.

Ajo vash zakoonbukkur
së ljeu ndër të mundasha;
porsa mua, ndë sbardhën ditta,
një kaljivez e ljërjeme
ajërartur tek firaksën
dhestra e baardh, maljet e ljumi,
saa më dëshiron te krahu
vajzën dëthinja-zëmër,
ajo mua më kaa hjee.

The snow falling on the sea
whitened the wings
of moorhens among the seaweed.
I long for sleep,
my body vanishes in the distance,
as a woman walking in the evening
through Morbella

hears the noise of the water-mills
and the barking of the dogs vanishing
above Milone, and sees
in the vineyards fires
that blaze and flicker,
sign of enduring life.

Oh that my dark-haired girl
would make my bed softly,
then spin in the twilight
humming a song,
I would forget
the sowings and the fountains
which nourish our life
lost under the snow,
forget the high-born lads
drumming loudly from Samrangatte
to the distant vineyards
as if saying: we protect you.

I would fall asleep dreaming
that the two of us hand in hand
went through the fields, the homes of men
recognizing us at dawn
as the stars left.
And if my unloosed horse galloped
towards a group of startled women,
she alone among them
would seize the reins on the ground
and tame him with her beauty
by looking into his eyes,
then my sweating chest
she would wipe with her handkerchief,
blushing at being watched.

Not in silken sheets was born
my good-natured girl,
so in the glaring summer days
I am content with an abandoned cabin
fanned by the wind,
from where I see the bright shore,
the mountain and the river.
There I long to hold in my arms
the one that holds my heart.

De Rada tells us in his *Autobiologia* that in his childhood he used to play at being a bandit with villagers who were orphans of bandits [30]. Various episodes in that work shed light on why banditry still existed in Calabria in the first half of the 19th century. Once his older brother Constantine shot a servant of the Duke of Corigliano in defense of some peasants whose oxen had been sequestered for having invaded the Duke's barley fields. Since Constantine went into hiding, Camillo, the youngest brother, was arrested as an accomplice. Camillo, who eventually became a priest, knifed a prison ringleader who bullied him, and was subsequently chosen as ringleader himself by the inmates of the Cosenza prison. De Rada mentions Michele Avati from his village as a « most terrible » bandit during the troubles of 1809-11. The poet himself went into hiding after the failure of the 1837 conspiracy in which he had participated, « sleeping with a gun » under the open sky, or in a vineyard shelter, or a stable [31].

Antonio Santori, a Franciscan friar, is another Calabro-Albanian whose work has a strong folkloric basis. His *Emira*, the first Albanian drama, is a pastoral play in Arcadian fashion, depicting the life of the Arbëresh shepherds and peasants in their villages at the foot of the Appennine range. The execution in 1861 of some bandits in Santa Caterina (Pizziglia), Santori's native village, furnished the framework for a love story in which an Arbëresh herdsman, Caloñeri, a spy to those bandits, tries to abduct Emira, a peasant girl he loves but who does not love him. Caloñeri first has the bandits burn the house and kill the herd of his rival Miriano, and then has the king's officier arrest him under a false accusation. Caloñeri is eventually murdered by the bandits while Emira marries her lover. The traditional Arbëresh wedding ceremony, including the ritual wedding songs, concludes the play. Other folk-like songs composed by Santori are inserted in it. One of them (II, 4) is sung by Caloñeri as he tries to seduce Emira:

Emira: Who taught you songs such as this?

Caloñeri: I collected them here and there. The most recent ones were composed and circulated by a fellow peasant, the son of Giosuele Santori. Would you like to learn one?

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[30] « Fino a sette anni, fuori degli occhi di mio padre, vagai nel paese conducendo contadinelli, orfani di briganti, in giuochi di palikari » (*Autobiologia* I, p. 4).

[31] *Autobiologia* II, 8-9; III, 16; and I, 27.

Emira: You're keeping me too long, my mother will scold me.

Caloñeri: Then, I'll recite it for you without singing it. (*He recites the text of a love song.*)

Emira: The monk wrote this? May he perish in boiling water! I thought it was a sacred song! [32]

Italo-Albanian literature is entirely rural in nature while remaining rooted in epic folk songs and national traditions. Calabro-Albanian writers — Variboba, De Rada, Santori, V. Straticò, G. Serembe — are sensitive to the socio-economic aspect of the peasant milieu they portray (democratic romanticism), whereas Siculo-Albanian poets — G. Dara, G. Schirò, Crispi-Glaviano — stress aspects of life characterizing the Arbëresh gentry from which they stem (aristocratic romanticism).

5. *The Peasant Dervish and the Bektashi Tradition.*

At about the same time that Variboba published his burlesque Christian poem, Zyko Kamberi, a Moslem from Kolonjë in the Korçë region, wrote a *mevlud*, a religious epic in praise of Muhammed. He also wrote poems in which he lashes out at those who represent the prophet on earth, the Sultan and the Sheh Islam (the Moslem Patriarch). Judging from his cultural formation and some autobiographical hints found in his more lyrical poems, he must have been an impoverished small provincial nobleman [33] who, having lost favor with the establishment, possibly because of his sharp tongue, found consolation in religion. Towards the end of his life, the saying goes, he became a dervish and, when he died, his tomb was made a shrine. The reverence of the peasants may be partly explained by the character of his satire. This involved aspects of the socio-political system which were loathsome to the peasants: going to war for the benefit of timariote chiefs, paying onerous taxes, and being cheated by corrupt officials. He also pities women married without consent, young men who migrate in order to earn enough to pay for a bride, the poor in general, for whon a dish of *trahan*, a starchy oriental soup, is a feast. Because his poems were addressed mostly to a peasant audience, his language is plain and largely free of the plethora of

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[32] From A. Straticò, *Letteratura albanese* (1896), p. 233.

[33] « Bej Kolonje » « Bey from Kolonja » is a phrase humorously used to describe a peasant boasting of being noble.

oriental words that makes Moslem literature almost unintellegible today. In 1789 he participated in the Turko-Austrian battle of the Danube. The poem « Royal Battle », which he wrote on that occasion to lament his misfortune and that of people like him who enrolled in the army attracted by the hope of looting, reminds one of the short play, « Homecoming », by the Italian Ruzzante (16th cent.), where a poor peasant joins a mercenary army to find, when he comes home poorer than he started out, that he does not even have a home any more, for his wife has abandoned him. We quote from Kamberi's poem « Money »:

Mbreti q'urdhëron dynjanë,
që ka vënë darabhanë
e i presënë paranë,
ja di kimenë parasë.
. . . . . .

She Islami q'ep fetfanë,
që di qitapëtë ç'thanë,
nukë kaçirdis paranë,
ja di kimenë parasë.
. . . . . .

Kadiut, t'i rrëfesh paranë,
ters e vërtit sherianë,
për para seç e shet t'anë,
ja di kimenë parasë.
. . . . . .

The emperor who rules the world
instituted the mint
where money is coined.
He knows the value of money.
. . . . . .

And the learned Sheh Islam
who rules over legal matters
does not let a coin slip through his fingers.
He knows the value of money.
. . . . . .

Show a coin to any judge,
and he'll twist the canonic law,
he'll sell his father for money.
He knows the value of money.

The satire's theme and its principal target, the high Sunni (orthodox) officials, are typical of dervish literature in branding official religion as corrupt. Wandering mendicant dervishes (the Turkish word means beggar) were frequent in the past in Toskëri [34], and a village there, Malëshovë, was a dervish shelter, « Malëshovít » meaning beggar more often than not. A mostly oral religious poetry, the work of dervishes, has been partly preserved [35]. Kamberi was not an isolated case, and a poem on the virtues of coffee, written in 1724 by Muçi Zade, precedes Kamberi's poem in praise of *trahan* [36].

There is no evidence that Kamberi belonged to the Bektashi order of dervishes which has a long tradition in Southern Albania. The order, named after its founder, Hadji Bektash (13th cent.), was originally a Shiah ramification which, because of its pantheistic bent and a spirit of tolerance for other religions (a Bektashi need not be a Moslem), was branded as heretical by Sunni authoritites. Bektashism was widespread among the Janissaries, many of whom were Albanians influential in the Ottoman army [37]. Imported into Albania as early as the 15th century [38], Bektashism eventually spread there to such an extent as to compete with Sunnism in some areas. The Bektashi temples (*tekke*) were centers of Albanian nationalism during the « awakening » period of Albanian nationalism [39]. The communist regime, which largely profited from their support (Baba Faja of Martanesh was one of the most popular leaders of the resistance movement) recognized the sect as a distinct religious organization, which it had practically always been.

In the first half of the 19th century, the *Tekke* of Frashër, a village in the Korçë region [40], was an influential Bektashi center. Two native dervishes, the brothers Dalip and Shahin, wrote religious epics in Albanian which link Zyko Kamberi with Naim Frashëri, the Tosk national poet. Frashëri, who knew Kamberi's poems and had absorbed the Bektashi doctrine in his native village during his adolescence,

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[34] Gabriele Dara, a 19th cent. Siculo-Albanian writer has a wandering dervish play the role of an informer in his *Last Song of Bala.*

[35] See Ali Baba Tomori, *Nefeze dhe gazele bektashiane,* Tirana, 1935.

[36] O. Myderrizi, « Letërsia shqipe në alfabet arab » in *BShSh* (1955) 2.

[37] Yahya Beg (16th cent.), author of *The King and the Beggar,* and *Yusuf and Zuleykha,* one of the important Turkish poets, was an Albanian Janissary officer (E. J. Gibb, *Ottoman Literature,* London 1901, p. 29).

[38] K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (1937), p. 72.

[39] The first *tekke* was that of Gjirokastër in the XVII century. (See Xhevat Kallajxhi, *Bektashizmi dhe Teqeja shqiptare n'Amerikë,* New York, 1964, p. 23).

[40] The village is also the home of the Aromunian tribe of the Farsherioti.

became an exegete of the doctrine in his mature years. He wrote a *Bektashi Manual* and also a Bektashi epic, *Qerbelaja* (1898), a shortened version of Dalip's *Hadikaja*. Frashëri's other epic, *History of Scanderbeg* (1898), glorifies the national hero whom the Albanians had all but forgotten during centuries of Ottoman domination. He wrote various lyrics of mystical inspiration, praising nature as God's manifestation, and beauty as his perceptible essence [41]. His masterpiece is *Herds and Crops* (1886), a bucolic poem in which shepherds and peasants first appear on the Tosk literary scene. They are little more than decorative elements in the description of the countryside. The poet's love for the latter is prompted by his disgust with city life:

> Mëndje! mer fushat e malet, jashtë, jashtë nga gyteti,
> Nga brenga, nga thash-e-themet, nga rrëmuja, nga rremeti.
> (25-6)

> Thoughts, run to mountains and plains, away from the city,
> from its anxieties and gossip, from noise and din.

This typical romantic theme of seeking refuge in nature is combined with the other romantic theme of nostalgic love for the countryside:

> O malet e Shqipërisë!e ju o lisat e gjatë!
> Fushat e gjëra me lule, q'u kam ndë mënt dit'e natë! (1-2)

> O mountains of Albania, with the tall oak-trees!
> And you, vast flowering plains, I recall you day and night!

Love of the countryside finds appeasement in natural beauty, while the contemplation of nature elicits the pantheistic love of God in the spirit of Bektashism. The portrayal of the shepherdess in the following passage is typically romantic:

> Vashë bukurosh'e bariut, që vjen me llërë përveshur,
> Me zëmërë të dëfryer, e me buzëtë të qeshur,
> Me dy shqerrazë ndër duar të bukura si dhe vetë,
> Në sythit tënt e shoh gazë, që s'e kam gjetur në jetë. (33-6)

> Beautiful shepherdess, with your sleeves tucked up,
> carrying on your arms two lambs as lovely as yourself,
> your heart at peace, your mouth smiling,
> in your eyes I discover a joy I've never known before.

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[41] See especially « Life », and « Beauty » in *Spring Flowers*.

The mystic quality of the joy is made explicit in the following passage:

Sa më pëlqen blegërima, zër'i ëmbl'i bagëtisë,
Qëngji edhe kec'i bukur, që rri më gjynj' e pi sisë!
Përhapurë bagëtija nëpër sheshe, nëpër brinja,
Nër lajthi e nëpër dushnja, ndër murriza, në dëllinja,
Bijen zilet e këmborët dhe fyelli e xhuraja,
Dheu mbleron e gjelbërojnë fusha, male, brigje, maja.
Edhe gjithë gjë'e gjallë ndjen në zëmrë një dëshirë,
Një gas t'ëmbëlë e të shumë, o sa bukur e sa mirë!
Pelën e ndjek mëz'i bukur, lopës i vete viçi pas,
Dallëndyshja punëtore bën folenë me të math gas.
Ogiçi ikën përpara, i bije tufës në ballë,
Me zëmrë të çelur shumë vete si trimi me pallë.
Zoqtë zënë këng'e valle dhe po kërcejn'e këndojnë,
E nëpër dega me lule si ëngjëllit fluturojnë.
Larashi ngrihet përpjetë, thua q'i shpije Perndisë
Një lëvdatë të bekuar për gëzimt të gjithësisë. (57-72)

Oh the sweet sound of the bleating, the lambs
and the kids suckling on their knees!
The herds are scattered on the meadows and cliffs,
among hazel bushes, oak-trees, briars and junipers.
Bells ring, flutes and pipes play,
mountains and plains, summits and slopes all green,
every living thing is filled with desire,
a soft overwhelming joy.
A colt trots behind a mare, a calf follows a cow,
an industrious swallow builds her nest,
a ram leads the herd, majestic as
a warrior with his bare sword leading his men.
Birds sing and dance among the boughs in bloom,
fluttering like angelic wings,
and a skylark rising high carries to God
the blessed praise of universal joy.

The poet also has an eye for the more prosaic aspects of pastoral life. Having evoked the young shepherd playing his pipe and the ram's ringing bell echoed by the mountain, he adds:

Bariu plak krrabën në dorë, edhe urdhëron të rinjtë,
E ata gjithë punojnë, ngriturë në bres pëqinjtë.
Ca bëjnë vathën e shtrungën, ca ngrehin tëndën e stanë,
Kush sjell gjeth e karthj'e shkarpa, sicilido ndih më nj'anë,

Kush përvjel, kush qeth sheleknë, kush mjel dhitë, kush mjel
[dhëntë,
Njëri mer ushqen këlyshnë, jatëri përgëzon qëntë.
Stopani bër'i zi sterrë shikon bulmetn'e bekuar,
Tunt, bën gjalpë, djathë, gjizë, edhe punon pa përtuar. (133-40)

An old shepherd with his staff gives orders to the youngsters.
They all work, their fustanellas tucked in their belts.
Some build a fold, some pitch a tent,
others fetch twigs and foliage, everyone does something,
either milking a sheep, a goat, or shearing a lamb,
feeding a pup or petting a dog.
The dairy man, black from smoke, looks after the milk,
he churns it, makes butter, cheese, whey, and never rests.

Agricultural work is not forgotten either. But here again the aesthetic element takes precedence:

O fushazëtë pëllore që m'ushqeni Shqipërinë,
Do të këndoj bukurinë tuaj edhe bujqësinë.
Ti Perndi e ligjërisë që rri në malt të Tomorit,
Unju posht'e më ndih pakë, o motra im'e të gjorit!
Më ke leshrat të florinjta e të ërgjënttë krahrorë,
Ball'e gush'e faq'e llërë dhe këmb'e duar dëborë.
Sindëkur do malësorët dhe pyjet e bagëtinë,
Duaj edhe fusharakët dhe arat e bujqësinë. (235-42)

Mundohétë punëtori, po në zëmërzët të qetë
Sa gas të math ndjen, kur njëra që hoth i pjell dymbëdhjetë.
Kur e sheh kallin'e plottë të kërrusurë nga barra,
Dhe Parrajsën e vërtetë të tfaqurë nëpër ara,
Kur heth lëmën e mbleth toknë, ndan bykn'e kashtën më nj'anë,
U heth kuajvet e qevet që janë lodhur të hanë,
Kur e përmbush plot shtëpinë me drith'e me gjë të gjallë,
Shtronet me uri në bukë e ha me djersë në ballë. (305-12)

You fertile plains that nourish Albania,
I'll sing your beauty and the labor of man.
You goddess of poetry dwelling on Mount Tomor,
come down and help me, o my sister!
you with the golden hair, the silver bosom,
the snow-white forehead, chin, arm, hands and feet.
As you love the highlanders, their herds and forests,
love also the peasants, their fields and their work!

The tiller works hard, but how great his joy
to see one seed yielding a score,
the full-grown ears of corn bending under their weight,
his field a vision of real Paradise.
After threshing and piling and separating the stalks,
fodder for horses and oxen, also tired from labor,
his house full of grain as well as livestock,
he eats heartily, his foreshead still perspiring.

A romantic bourgeois, nostalgic for the village where he was born and lived during his youth, Frashëri describes the countryside in an idyllic way which lies somewhere between Virgil and Arcadia. But, unlike the Arcadians, he has a genuine, though shallow, feeling for the countryside and, unlike most romantics, he does not eliminate the human element from it, making nature a mere receptacle for his melancholy. Yet the countryside and its people appear side by side, and the emphasis is on the former. He hardly mentions the hardships of labor, but stresses the peacefulness and the delights of rural life. Nowhere does a dissonant note disturb the mystical euphoria in which all conflicts are reconciled. The poor shepherds and the landless peasants are not his concern, and it is significant that a beggar intruding on the scene (83-90) is quickly dismissed by an appeal to the rich to give him alms. Frashëri does not say whether the beggar was a wandering dervish, a type he seems to have disliked, judging from the following lines in « God », a poem in *Spring Flowers*:

Trajstën ke plot me bukë
Dhe hiqesh si i mjerë,
Dhe ke zën'e thua nukë
E lipën derë më derë.
Eshtë ndaj teje i gjallë,
Ti e kërkon nëpër gurë,
Në të rrem'e në përrallë...

Your bag is full of bread,
but you feign to be poor,
saying that you have nothing
and go begging from door to door.
(The living God) is close to you,
but you look for him among stones,
in tales and false stories...

6. *The Warrior Shepherd and the Franciscan Tradition.*

The Catholic counterpart of Bektashi literature is Franciscan. This literature is a rather recent phenomenon and was inititated by an Italo-Albanian missionary, Leonardo De Martino, whose *L'arpa di un italo-albanese* (1881) contains mostly religious poems in both Albanian and Italian[42]. Franciscanism was imported by foreign missionaries into Northern Albania. Mostly because they were a mendicant order, the Franciscan friars could establish friendly relations with the poor highlanders to whom they ministered, and towards the end of the 19th century most of the Franciscans in Albania were natives, usually of peasant origin.

The Franciscan gospel could not substantially affect the rugged nature and the rigid mores of the highlanders. Rather the contrary happened, the friars dispensed with some of the basic teachings of their founding father and became champions of Albanian nationalism. Their activity is part and parcel of the national movement for autonomy and independence starting with the League of Prizren. And since nationalism in Northern Albania was defined by opposition to Slavic expansion, the Franciscan friars soon found themselves leading that opposition. The Slavs reacted by murdering two Franciscan Albanians, Alois Palić and Shtjefën Gjeçov (in 1913 and 1929 respectively). Facts such as these explain the virulence of slavophobia on the part of Albanian Franciscans and especially of their chief exponent, Gjergj Fishta.

Gjeçov deserves particular mention for his pioneering work in folklore. A peasant from Kosovo, he lived at a time when collecting folklore was considered first a nationalistic task and then a scientific enterprise in Albania. His collection of the highland customary law, *The Code of Lek Dukagjini* (published posthumously in 1933), although incomplete and suffering from an ecclesiastical bias, is an indispensable tool of reference, the only existing document of its kind. Partly due to Gjeçov's initiative, the Albanian Franciscan friars devoted a large amount of their intellectual endeavor to the collection of Gheg folklore. V. Prennushi published *Gheg Folk songs* (1911), M. Sirdani, *Scanderbeg According to Tradition* (1926), B. Palaj and D. Kurti collected and published the legendary epic songs constituting the Mujo-Halil cycle, *Heroic Songs and Legends* (1937). With the exception of Prennushi, a Scutarene, all these collectors were highlanders.

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[42] He also wrote a pastoral drama (G. Petrotta, *Popolo, lingua e letteratura albanese* (1931), p. 291).

Their organ was *Hylli i Dritës* (The Morning Star), in which a great deal of the folklore appeared. Fishta, editor of that influential journal, contributed little to the collection of folklore, but he did something equally praiseworthy: he used it in original work.

Before we consider his masterpiece, *Lahuta e Malcís* (The Highland Lute), we must dwell on a novel which the reader may find especially valuable as an introduction to that epic. Although written in French, *Bardha de Témal. Scènes de vie albanaise* (1890), has the merit of being one of the first Gheg novels. The author, Pashko Vasa (1827-92), is better known as an ideologist of Albanian nationalism. His *Verité sur l'Albanie et les Albanais* (1879), a political pamphlet, was preceded by two works in Italian, *La mia prigionia,* a narrative of his participation in the defense of besieged Venice in 1850, and *Rose e spine,* a volume of poems. He ended his days peacefully as Vassa Pasha, the Turkish governor of Lebanon, shortly after having published his novel, a nostalgic evocation of his native town. He begins his narrative by summarizing the history of Scutari, the main setting of the imaginary story he narrates. Bardha, a Scutarene lady married to the chieftain (*bajraktar*) of the Temal tribe, comes home to visit her parents. There she meets the son of a rich Catholic notable, the young Arad, and they fall in love. Provoked by an arrogant Moslem, Arad kills him in a duel, then goes into hiding. The governor imprisons his father, who is then released on condition that his son leave the country. Bardha returns to her husband's home where she is murdered by her mother-in-law who has sensed that her daughter-in-law is in love with another man, thus betraying her son.

More important than the love story, a sequence of romantic and romanticized clichés combining Hugo and Tasso, is the novel's sociological content. The novel is one of manners and morals, the author's objective being to show how the Albanians, « abandoned to their own instincts, could not benefit from the progress of civilization » (Chapter I). They stuck to their traditional virtues — valor, honor and fidelity — which the author praises highly, finding them equally in all Albanians, whether highlanders or townsmen, Christians or Moslems. But he does not close his eyes to their vices: ignorance, excessive pride, predatory instincts, tribalism. He condemns the cruelty of the mother-in-law, the chieftain's bombast in marrying a bourgeois lady, his waging war on another, Catholic, Albanian tribe. And focusing on the institution of the vendetta, he disapproves of the violence and ruthlessness with which it is exercised.

Jak Kola, a Catholic highlander who has disobeyed the governor's order to enlist in an expedition against the Montenegrins and who

has also resisted the police chief's order of arrest, is first mortally wounded and then publicly beheaded. His wife Dava listens to his improvised epic song in which he reminds the onlookers that « the blood of the valiant is never spilled in vain », then dips her handkerchief in his blood without saying a word. The next day she manages to get hired as a servant in the household of the police chief who is responsible for the crime. She then persuades an old mountaineer in the service of Arad's father to kill the culprit for a sum of money. The old mountaineer kills the police chief and flees to the mountains, where he runs into Dava's brother who has murdered the Captain of the Mountains, a Moslem governmental officer, to avenge his brother-in-law [43]. Two for one is, however, not right according to the customary law. The tribe has a meeting during which a member points out, in defense of the assassin, that the second victim belonged to the same family as the officer who has denounced Jak Kola, denunciation leading to murder. The tribal chief rejects this argument as invalid by pointing out that informing is not the same as perpetration of the crime and that the vendetta law applies only to its perpetrator. He then rules that the second killing was uncalled for and therefore the culprit must pay for it. This means that the family of the victim is entitled to kill a person of Jak Kola's family while his house must be burned and his livestock confiscated, half going to the Pasha and half to the tribal leaders. The author comments: « The [Turkish] Pasha and the [Albanian] Captains of the Mountains would almost always agree in inciting the Albanians to kill each other, so that they could, taking advantage of the right that the customary law gave them, burn their houses, disperse their families and confiscate their possessions » [44].

A peasant by birth — he was born in Fishtë, a village in the plain of Zadrimë between Scutari and Alessio —, Fishta completed his theological studies in Bosnia. He read with eagerness such Croatian poets as Kačić and Martić, whose works are based on epic folk songs [45]. He also read the famous *Death of Smajl Aga Čengijić* by Mažuranić [46], in which a local clash between Montenegrins and Turks is

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[43] Dava's little son, who is with his uncle, cries with frustration at learning that someone else has already killed the culprits, thus robbing him of his right to take revenge on at least one of them.

[44] The author adds that these old primitive laws have been replaced by the Sultan's laws based on « justice and equality », in conformity with the legal system of civilized nations. Vassa Pasha is a Catholic Turkish Pasha.

[45] P. Bardhi, Preface to *Lahuta e Malcís* (1937).

[46] See *Lahuta* XXV, 562.

used to portray the century-long Slavic struggle against their dominator. Fishta's first epic, *At the Rrzhanica Bridge* (1905), deals with a clash between Montenegrins and Northern Albanians of the Hot and Grudë tribes symbolizing the struggle between Albanians and Slavs. The model is Mažuranić, the spirit that of the Gheg epic folk songs. Many stylistic patterns characterizing the rhapsodies of the Mujo-Halil cycle have been incorporated in the cantos whose length, an average of 225 lines per canto, is approximately that of the legendary rhapsodies. The meter is that of the historical epic songs, the rhymed octosyllabic, the national Albanian line. The ethos is the customary law informing both the legendary and the historical epic songs.

When Fishta set out to write his first epic commemorating the 1880 clash between Albanians and Montenegrins, tribal ethics (family and property relationships in particular) had changed little since medieval times when they had been instituted. Turkey had no interest in changing the customs and mores of the Albanian highlanders, and limited itself to asserting its sovereignty over their territory. The taxes the highlanders paid in the form of a tribute were small, but they had to serve in the Ottoman army, led by their *bajraktars*. Some of these and other chiefs were converted to Islam, and the government used them as mediators often favoring the government's side. Fishta's first epic gives a fairly objective picture of such a historical situation. For instance, he does not hide the fact that the overwhelmingly Catholic tribes of Hot and Grudë are led to battle by a Moslem bajraktar. The subjective element is Fishta's slavophobia:

> Un Shqyptár, ata janë Shkjé:
> Né na dán nji gjak e 'i fé:
> N'mní t'sho'shoqit kemi lé:
> Kem' ndermjet nji qiell e 'i dhé! (XIV, 58-61)
>
> I am Albanian and they are Slavs.
> Both blood and faith divide us.
> We were born to hate each other.
> Between us are the sky and the earth.
>
> Uh! Europë, ti kurva e motit,
> Qi i rae mohit besës e Zotit,
> Po a ky â shêji i gjytetnís:
> Me dá token e Shqypnís
> Për me mbajtë klysht e Rusís? (XIII, 40-44)
>
> Europe, you old whore,
> you who trampled on God and faith!

It this your civilization's emblem,
to chop up Albania to fatten
Russia's cubs?

Fishta's tremendous verbal power finds adeguate expression in the epic representation of the battle. His rightly celebrated portrait of the highland shepherd shows him to be a superb popular bard, his hero the very embodiment of the *genius loci*:

Marash Uci i Uc Mehmetit,
Anë e m'ânë i kisht' rá detit,
Kishte pá pronet e Mbretit
Çak prej Hotit tue zânë filli
Dér kû piqet buka m'dielli.
Pse sa kje Marashi i rí,
I pat dalë Mbretit n'ushtrí
Me armë n'dorë, me zjarm në gjí,
Si qi doke âsht në Shqypní.
Burrë i fortë e trim si Zâna,
Armët i kjenë ktij baba e nâna:
Babë tagani e nânë breshâna,
Vllá e moter dý pistolet,
Dý gjarpnusha prej Stambollet.
Ky kje lypun edhè gjetun,
Pat kênë thirrun edhè pvetun
E n'kushtrim e n'gjýq t'bajrakut,
E nder prê mârrë Karadakut. (XII, 7-24)

Marash Uci son of Uc Mehmeti
had crossed the wide sea,
had seen all the King's possessions
from his native Hot to the land
where bread is baked in the sun.
In his youth Marash had served
in the King's army bearing
deadly weapons and a fiery heart
as Albanians do.
Strong and valiant like Zâna herself *,
his father and mother were his weapons,
his yatagan and his rifle,

* The Alb. *zânë* « mountain fairy » is the equivalent of the Serbo-Croatian *vila*.

his brother and sister his two pistols,
two vipers from Constantinople.
His advice and judgment were
always much sought after, and not only in war
but also in tribal law suits
and when they divided Montenegrin loot.

The portrait is moral, in keeping with tradition, wherein valor and wisdom are complementary virtues. Engraved in the following passage is the hero's legacy to the younger shepherds, the ancestral blazon of virtues:

« Amanet un jam t'u lânë
Me ruejtë gjân me kqyrun stâ'n,
Armët e mbushne mos me i dhânë,
Me shokë tuej kurr mos m'u zânë,
Mos m'u zânë as mos m'u ngá,
Pse n'ditë t'ngushtë kta u gjinden vllá
Si me pushkë ashtu me uhá.
T'huj'n me fjalë mos t'a poshtnoni;
Buken para por t'i a shtroni
N'Shqyptarí si â kênë zakoni:
Me i besue mos i besoni!
Edhe n'mend kinje nji fjalë:
Zêmers s'frŷt me i lânun dalë;
Fjalët për pajë kurr mos me i ndalë,
Ujit turbull mos me i rá,
Mos me dalun n'vá t'pa vá;
Me i u ruejtun rrasës së lmueme,
Me i u ruejtun shakës s'terbueme,
Me i u ruejtë, po, grues së lshueme.
Vendin tuej m'e dashtë perore,
Me ruejtë besë, mos me çartë ndore ». (XII, 86-106)

« This is my bequest: preserve
your goods, take care of the fold,
never yield your loaded weapons!
Quarrel not with your friends,
nor offend them, for they are
your brothers in time of hardship,
helping you with money or guns.
Insult not the stranger,
but offer him hospitality
as is the custom in Albania:

yet never trust him.
Let a man vent
his anger, and never
use words for ornament.
Swim not in turbid waters,
cross no river without a ford.
Beware of smooth slate,
beware of a rabid bitch,
and also of a dissolute woman.
Love your country, keep your word,
never betray one who gave you his trust.

Fishta's second epic, *Vranina*, is again about the border hostilities between Albanians and Montenegrins. But the main hero now is a townsman, a Moslem Scutarene in charge of a Turkish fort located on the island of Vranina in the Scutari Sea. In 1858, a Montenegrin expedition captured the fort, but only after Oso Kuka blew himself up in the besieged arsenal. His heroic death is the subject of a Scutarene epic folk song which inspired Fishta. He interprets the Montenegrin assault as a Russian move to harass and weaken Turkey in Albania while presenting the Albanian defense as a concerted effort on the parts of all Ghegs, both townsmen and mountaineers, to defend the North-Albanian borders against Slavic expansion. The enemy are the Slavs, not the Turks. Written in 1907, when Albania was still an Ottoman province and Turkey in decay, Fishta's position is that of the Albanian patriots of the time who feared that Albania might be partitioned between Slavs and Greeks if Turkey lost its European dominions. His invocation to « the lords of Albania and the mountain chiefs » (IV, 254-5), with the active participation of the clergy, the classes holding the balance of power, is for an autonomous (not independent) Albania within the framework of the Turkish empire:

Qi Shqypnija t'jetë e vetit,
Qi shqyptarët t'sherbejn nja'i mbretit. (IV, 220-1)

So that Albania may belong to itself,
and the Albanians serve only one King.

Fishta returned to the epic when Albania started functioning as a normal independent state in 1921-23 (he was, at the time, Vice-President of the first Albanian Parliament). His third volume, *The League of Prizren*, takes us back to the historical period marked by that event. But now Fishta, hailed by his admirers as a national poet, is eager to deserve the lofty title, and therefore broadens the scope

of his narrative further. In the enlarged historical framework, the Rrzhanica battle becomes one of many episodes of the national liberation movement, and the center of gravity shifts from Scutari to Prizren. The poet describes the diplomacy of Prince Nicholas of Montenegro in winning over the great powers at the Congress of Berlin (Canto VII), then portrays the national Convention at Prizren, devoting a whole canto to one of its leaders, Ali Pasha Gucia. A Tosk leader, Abdul Frashëri, the mastermind of the Convention, delivers the opening speech, which sanctions the union of Ghegs and Tosks, Moslems and Christians (Canto IX). Canto X takes us to Gjakovë, where Mehmed Ali Pasha, the Turkish commander, is killed by the rioting population together with Abdullah Bey Dreni, his host, after the latter refused, according to the customary law, to deliver his guest.

Written after the achievement of independence, the third volume reflects Fishta's changed attitude towards Turkey. The Turks are now enemies, just as Slavs are. But since the latter are no longer a threat to Albania and since the arch-enemy, Montenegro, has been wiped off the map and incorporated into the new kingdom of Yugoslavia, the poet allows himself some fun at the expense of the dethroned Prince, here shown as a beggar at the Congress of Berlin, appealing for compassion from the participants (VII, 48-65). But mockery introduced into an epic may sour it. And when, in the next canto, we see Ali Pasha Gucia uprooting oaks, like the legendary Mujo, by virtue of the power Zana has given him, the reader is uncertain whether to laugh, or smile. Epic times are gone for an Albania embarked on a western-like democratic experience, the epic muse no longer responds to the poet's solicitations. The third volume is uninspired, a mere exercise in rhetoric, with humor — not of the best kind — trying to enliven a subject matter which is practically dead.

Fishta himself must not have been very happy at having to meet the requirements of nationalist officialdom. A gap of fourteen years divides the second from the third volume. Then another long pause occurs (1923-1930), during which the epic was put aside. In 1930 the poet resumed the work without enthusiasm, at times reluctantly, as Canto XXVI, « New Times », clearly suggests. There the poet invokes his muse to help him play the lute that has long been « lying on the shelf ». He is old now, his former vigor has left him. He has come to the Franciscan monastery near Alessio, where Scanderbeg died and was buried, to draw fresh inspiration for his monument in which « the process of Albanian destiny » has been recorded. The *exegi monumentum* motif is spelled out in Canto XXX (23-4). He finally finished his epic, consisting of thirty cantos arranged in a

chronological order depending on their historical content. *Vranina* comes first (I-V), followed by *The League of Prizren* cantos (VI-X). Canto XI, « The Ghost », a folklike burlesque taunting Prince Nicholas, links these cantos to those making up *At the Rrzhanica Bridge* (XII-XV). Canto XVI, « The Hydra », tells of a grotesque battle between the mythological monster and the Albanian heroes cast in the roles of « dragons » attacking her — the canto in supposed to be an allegory of the battles between Gheg highlanders and Montenegrins that occupy the rest of *Lahuta* (XVII-XXX). Most of these cantos were written in 1930-35: four in 1930, three in each of the years 1932, 1933 and 1934; one in 1935 [47]. Canto XIX, « Father Gjoni », shows a Franciscan friar — Fishta's projection of himself — participating in the battle. Since he cannot use a gun because of his robe, he vents his anger by cursing — a Franciscan friar turned into a biblical prophet:

Por shka t'bâj? pse as Frati s'vret.
Veç me i nâmë a ká kush m'pret?
Kam me i nâmë, pra, nemos tjeter;
Me i mallkue pa qiri e leter,
Veç me lot të sŷve t'mí,
Lot me gjak e vnér perzí.
Fíll po dal, po, m'at kep bjeshke,
Edhe sjellun prej Sutjeske
Po t'i shuej me arë, me farë,
Po t'i shuej me dhên, me dhí,
E me rob e me robí,
Plak e t'ŕij, e grue e fmí,
Tatë e bír e vllá edhè moter:
S'po t'i u lâ, jo carâ m'voter. (XIX, 291-305)

What can I do? A friar cannot kill.
But who can keep me from cursing?
Curse them I will, this at least, I can do,
and not with bell book and candle,
but with these tears from my eyes,
tears mixed with blood and gall.
I'll go to the rim of that cliff
and, facing Sutjeska,
I'll wipe them out, their fields and sowings,
I'll wipe them out, their grazings and pastures,
I'll wipe them out, their sheep and goats,

[47] B. Dema, « Veprimi letrar i A. Gj. Fishtës » in *Hylli i dritës* (1942), 11-12.

all of them, all their families,
old and young, women and children,
fathers and sons, brothers and sisters,
not a stone will I leave unturned in their hearths.

In another episode, « Tringa » (Canto XXII), a lengthy pastiche of the well-known rhapsody of Gjergj Elez Alia, a mountain girl caring for her dying brother guns down a Montenegrin about to plunder her house. The poet comments:

Hiqi gisht he bujareshë,
Se 'imend kênke 'i bí prej fisit!
Bjeri Shkjaut, bre sokoleshë,
Mu në parzme per midisit!
E t'a diej Knjazi n'Cetinë,
Se edhè n'qitët Shqyptarët aj fare,
Pasha Zotin, n'Shqypní s'hînë
Dér t'jetë gjallë ndo'i bí shqyptare. (XXII, 854-61)

Pull the trigger, noble girl,
true daughter of your tribe!
Shoot the Slav, valiant girl,
Shoot him right in the chest!
Let the Prince in Cetigne know
that even if he exterminates the Albanians,
by God, he won't have Albania
as long as an Albanian woman lives.

A warrior priest is not exceptional among the Albanians and a warrior woman is even more common; she is a type often found in epic folk songs. Fishta may be given credit for portraying such types, marred though they are by slavophobic bombast [48]. But then

[48] Slavophobia is far from being common to Gheg Catholic authors. Zef Jubani (1818-80), from Scutari, published in 1878 a poem in Italian dedicated to « sua altezza serenissima Nicola I, Principe della Cernagora, Berda, Erzegovina e del territorio Antibarense ». The Prince wrote « Malisorki Ustanak », a poem of 215 quatrains, in praise of the Albanian mountaineers fighting Turgut Pasha's army in 1881 (in *Cjelokupna Književna Djela Kralja Nikole I* (ed. by D. Vuksan, Podgorica). Nor was slavophobia shared by the Gheg tribes themselves. An episode in *Lahuta* XI, 719-816 features two blood brothers (Alb. *probatin*), one Albanian and the other Montenegrin, who stop fighting as soon as they recognize each other, and then converse in a friendly manner and exchange gifts. Fishta specifies that the Montenegrin had fed and sheltered the Albanian for three years, when the latter escaped to Montenegro, after murdering a Turkish officer.

he has the Mountain Fairies give burial to Tringa, whose tomb is dug by two she-wolves and whose body is wrapped in golden tissue stamped with Christ's heart and St. Anthony's image (XXIV, 414-35). In another canto, he tells us that the Muses « have deserted the mountains and meadows of Greece to settle in Albania », where they speak and sing in Albanian, together with the Albanian Fairies (XXVI, 327-35). To prove his point, he has the Albanian and Montenegrin Fairies come to blows, just as the Homeric gods did. In the ensuing fight, the Great Montenegrin Fairy of Dormitor is captured, then brought to Tringa's tomb, where two Albanian witches whip her with vipers until « her body is covered with blood » and she is left crying « like a cat on the roof in February » (XXV, 1099-1144). *The Highland Lute* which started as a true epic exalting the virtues of the Gheg highlanders ends in a verbose [49] grotesque in which history and mythology overlap, folklore is misused, and national tradition parochialized.

7. *The Poor Peasant in the Works of Exiled or Alien Orthodox Writers.*

The literature of the period between the two world wars is urban in nature and bourgeois in inspiration. The constitution of a state with a central government in Tirana made the capital the socio-political hub of the nation. The democratic government was at the outset dominated by landlords who were indifferent to the plight of their tenant farmers. And when an autocratic government came into power (1925), and the President of the Republic evolved into a monarch (1928), the latter was preoccupied with consolidating his grip on the nation by getting rid of his rivals. His more advanced social reforms — the unveiling of Moslem women, the laicization of schools — gave the government some western luster without changing the economic structure of the nation in the least. The economy remained semifeudal and the social composition changed only by the emergence of a new class of governmental employees and military. The school system and the organization of culture was such as to benefit this new urban class. The westernizing drive resulted in the propagation of modern

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[49] Cantos XXII, XXIV and XXV have more than 1100 lines each — the first volume, *At The Rrzhanica Bridge*, has 1100 lines in all. The second half of *Lahuta* (more than 10,000 lines) is a prolix coda to the first (less than 5000 lines). A computation of the first fifteen cantos (less Canto XIV, an addition) in their original editions shows that the earliest cantos are the shorter: the average for *At the Rrzhanica Bridge* (1905) is 225 lines, 328 for *Vranina* (1907), and 382 for *The League of Prizren* (written in 1921-22); but 710 for the last fifteen cantos (XVI-XXX).

bourgeois trends of thought, alien to Albanian reality. No wonder the peasantry was almost completely absent from literary works: writing about them was considered bad taste.

Before reviewing the literature between the two world wars, we must dwell a little on some authors of the previous generation who were not indifferent to the economic and social problems of the peasants. It is no accident that almost all of these writers are both Orthodox and exiles. The system of *timars* and *çifliks* which could not thrive in the mountainous cantons of Northern and Central Albania, prevailed in the plains and plateaus of Central and Southern Albania inhabited largely by Orthodox Albanians, including a considerable number of albanized Aromunians (Vlachs)[50]. Many of these rayahs constituting the labor force on the estates owned by beys and agas emigrated, first to various parts of the Turkish empire, then to Egypt and Rumania, and later to the United States.

Andon Chako (1886-1930) was born in Sheper, a village in the Gjirokastër region. His father who had become rich in the tobacco trade sent his son to study law in Switzerland. Being well-to-do, the young lawyer did not have to practice his profession in Cairo where he settled, and could devote himself to literature while also being active in the national liberation movement. A democrat with liberal ideas and mindful of his rural and possibly rayah origin — Çajupi, his pen name, is that of a mountain in the Zagori district facing his native village —, he was aware of the plight of the peasants. Many poems in his *Baba-Tomorri* (1902) are about the Albanian countryside which he portrays realistically, wasting little time in the nostalgic outpourings that characterize Albanian literature in exile. Nor does he hide, like romantic and post-romantic poets, the unpleasant and sometimes ugly side of rural life. « The Shepherd's Pipe » begins with the following stanza:

Bariu, shokë, bariu,
kur gjëmon e fryn veriu
është përjashta fatziu,
e rre breshëri dhe shiu!

The shepherd, o my friends,
when lightening strikes and the wind blows,
is outside, the poor fellow,
scourged by rain and hail.

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[50] The Aromunians of the Myzeqe plain were called *lalë Myzeqeje*, a derogatory term.

Çajupi is the first to raise his voice against the exploitation of peasant women by their husbands. Very telling in this respect is « My Village »:

Maletë me gurë,
fusha me bar shumë,
aratë me grurë,
më tutje një lumë.

Fshati për karshi,
me kish'e me varre,
rotull ca shtëpi
të vogëla fare.

Ujëtë të ftotë,
era punemadhe,
bilbili ia thotë,
gratë si zorkadhe.

Burrat nënë hie
lozën, kuvëndojnë.
Pika që s'u bie,
se nga gratë rrojnë!

Gratë venë nd'arë
dhe në vreshta gratë;
gruaja korr barë,
punon dit'e natë.

Gratë në të shirë,
në të vjela gratë;
ikinë pa gdhirë,
kthenenë me natë.

Gruaja për burrë
digjetë në diell,
punon e s'rri kurrë,
as ditën e diel.

O moj shqipëtarkë
që vet'e nget qetë,
edhe drek'e darkë
kthenej e bën vetë,

moj e mjera grua,
ç'e do burrëzinë

që ftoet në krua,
dhe ti mban shtëpinë?

Bare rocky mountains,
meadows full of grass,
fields of wheat, and beyond,
a flowing river.

A village in front of it
with a church and a graveyard
and a few tiny houses
scattered around.

Cold spring water
and excellent air,
the nightingale's song
and lovely women.

The men in the shadows
play and chat.
Fie! their women
work for them.

Women in the fields,
women in the vineyards,
women cut the grass,
women work at home.

Women do the harvesting,
women gather grapes;
they go out at dawn,
they come back at night.

The wife for her husband
in the heat of day
works and never rests,
not even on Sunday.

Poor Albanian woman,
who tills the soil with oxen,
and then comes home to
prepare lunch and dinner.

What's the point of having
a do-nothing husband

refreshing himself at the fountain
while you see to everything?

Çajupi wrote a comedy in verse, *A Bridegroom at Fourteen* (1902), ridiculing the countryside custom of early marriages. And in one of his poems he has harsh words for those who abandon their land in hope of better opportunities abroad, while emphasizing the consequences of exile on family life: direliction of the wife and disintegration of the family. His social criticism is typical of the liberal bourgeois approach to the problems of the peasants, losing sight of the cause while dwelling on the effect. He cannot see that early marriages were contingent on the villagers' need for manual work, while the main reason for their emigration was their desire to free themselves from servitude to the landlords [51].

Mihal Grameno (1872-1931), the son of a small merchant from Korçë, was a guerrilla fighter in his youth and lived in the United States during World War I. A political agitator and a journalist, Grameno wrote short stories and dramas inspired by populistic ideals. *The Family Name* (1909) is a love story involving a social conflict. Malo, the son of a local bey, marries Vahide, a peasant girl, in spite of the opposition of his father for whom the marriage is a stain on his family's name. To remove that stain, he first sends his son to fight the Greeks, then burns the house in which Vahide lives with her child, Rexhep. She grows insane, thinking that her boy has perished, whereas he has been rescued by peasants. Malo reacts by becoming a haiduk who preys on the rich and gives to the poor. The cruel bey regrets his acts, he becomes compassionate and does good deeds. At one time, Vahide, still insane, and Rexhep, now a young man, are living under his roof, unaware of each other's identity. In a skirmish with the bandits, Rexhep is made prisoner, then recognized by his father. Malo then leaves the band and comes back to his father's home. Vahide is cured. Rexhep marries the daughter of the bey's superintendent, and everybody is happy.

The pictures of peasants by urban writers are either idyllic, or unlikely [52]. Foqion Postoli, the son of a small shopkeeper from Korçë,

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[51] See H. Hecquard, *Histoire et description de la haute Albanie* (1863), p. 70.

[52] Ndre Mjeda (1866-1937), the foremost Gheg lyrical poet, wrote a fine idyll, « The Dream of life », portraying the life of a peasant woman and her two daughters, one of whom dies of consumption, while the other marries happily. On the other hand, « Freedom », a powerful sequence of six sonnets, is an appeal to Gheg highlanders to free themselves from Turkish oppression by following the example of... the American revolution.

spent many years in the United States where he published *For the Defense of the Country* (1919). The novel, a mellifluous patriotic version of Grameno's *The Family Name*, tells of the idyll between a Moslem bey and an Orthodox peasant girl who are, after many reversals of fortune, finally united. Idyllic is also Asdren's portrayal of country life, although this talented Tosk poet of poor peasant stock (he is from Drenovë, a Bulgarian village near Korçë and lived in Rumania, 1872-1947) has words of glowing sympathy for tenant farmers and rayahs when he happens to mention them in his poems. The other major Tosk poet, Lasgush Poradeci (b. 1899), a native of the picturesque town of Pogradec on Lake Ohrid, uses the countryside for lyrical effects. « Our Village Fountain » is a stylized folk song. In « End of Autumn » the landscape elicits idyllic thoughts:

Fluturoi dhe shtërg'i fundit madhështor me shpirt të gjorë,
dyke shkuar që menatë sipër malesh me dëborë...
Iku rëndë e i përmallshmë, dhe me sqep të ti të fortë
zotëriut q'i la folezën i trokiti mu në portë...

Pra më s'duket shpes'i fatit prapa bujqish edhe plorësh,
prapa brazdës së rëxuar hap me hap prej qe malorësh;
më s'dëgjohet nër ugare të kërcasë miu i hirtë,
vdiq nepërka pikëlore ndaj blatisht'e shkretëtirtë.

Dher' i mardhur prej thëllimi dirgjet heshtur nënë brymë,
fryn veriu në pyll të thatë me zemrim e me fyrtymë.
E si shtohet cingërima, ja! se ku, dinak dh'i voçërr,
nepër gardhe nepër ferra dërdëllet gazmor një çoçërr...

O! sa hir që kishte shtërgu, aq fisnik me shtat të gjorë,
kur bariste dalngadalë, posi dhëndër me kurorë!
E kur pran'i vinte krilla, që shëndrij në kraharuar,
me sy lart, me hap të matur, posi vash'e nusëruar...

The last stork flew away early in the morning,
soaring over snowy mountains magnificent and sad,
regretfully leaving his nest at his master's house
after knocking at his door with his sturdy beak.

The auspicious bird no longer follows the furrows
cut by the plough pulled by mountain oxen,
no longer is the grey mouse heard in the fallows,
the dappled viper is dead in the barren marshes.

The chilled soil is silent beneath the frost,
the northwind rages in the leafless wood.
And as it gets colder, a humming bird passes
droning over the hedges and in the thornbushes.

O how graceful was the slender noble stork
walking slowly like a bridegroom at a wedding,
while at his side the crane with radiant breast,
eyes uplifted, moving with measured step, seemed his bride.

Mitrush Kuteli (b. 1907), pen name of Dhimitër Pasko, also a native of Pogradec and who studied and lived in Rumania until World War I, published a volume of short stories, *Albanian Nights* (1932), lyrical memories of his childhood in his native town with the countryside in the background. *Ago Jakupi* (1943) portrays aspects of peasant life from a rather touristic point of view[53], hardly touching on the lingering semifeudal conditions of the people whose stories it tells.

A more conspicuous place is devoted to peasants in the works of two younger Orthodox writers. Again, it is no accident that they are both of low social origin and of non-Albanian descent, practically second-class citizens, a sort of exiles at home.

Sterjo Spasse (b. 1914), a native of a village on Prespa Lake in which the population was mostly of Macedonian origin, is a typical populist writer. The scion of a rayah family who was fortunate enough to get some education (he graduated from a teachers college), Spasse was bound to be more involved with peasant problems. Autobiographical details relating to his humble origin and the peasant life in the Prespa region are abundant in his juvenile narrative *From Life to Life: Why?* (1935) as well as in his novel *Afërdita* (1944), the story of a young teacher confronted with the backward customs and superstitions of the village where she teaches. His later narrative works, published after the liberation, stress the oppression of the rayah peasants by local landlords. His novel *They Were Not Alone* (1953), which was honored with the Prize of the Republic, is an impassioned and at times vivid description of the atrocities of a bey who, for example, in order to build his mansion on a hill where a poor peasant has his cottage, has his men destroy the cottage and throw the family out. Spasse's deeply felt concern for the peasants is conveyed in an unadorned language and style purporting to remain on a low and often folkloric level.

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[53] « My Village Knows How to Drink Brandy » is a good example.

The writer who inaugurates socialist literature in Albania, Migjeni (acronym of Gjergj Millosh Nikolla), had a short life (1911-38) and wrote little. Born in Scutari to a poor family of Slavic descent, Migjeni graduated from the Orthodox Seminary in Bitola (Yugoslavia), and worked as a schoolteacher until he died of tuberculosis. His *Free Verse* (1936), which was censured and confiscated, contains a poem, « The Mountaineer's Recital », which begins with the following stanza:

O si nuk e kam nji grusht të fortë
t'i bij mu në zemër malit që s'bëzanë,
t'a dij dhe ai se ç'do me thanë i dobët,
n'agoni të përdîhet si vigan i vramë!

O why don't I have a strong fist
to hit the dumb mountain right at the heart!
so that it might know what it is like to be weak,
and tumble down agonizing like a felled giant!

During his teaching period in Pukë, a mountainous village in Northern Albania, he was appalled by the moral squalor of the peasants — their economic squalor was common knowledge. He witnessed how famine and lack of sanitation can turn a population celebrated for its heroic virtues into docile subjects accepting all kinds of humiliations from a repressive government. In one of his rare moments of modesty Fishta had confessed:

Zdathë e zdeshë Shqyptari i ngratë,
Brîn për tokë e buken thatë,
Nuk m'ka zêje as s'm'ká zanát:
M'a shkon jeten në siklet,
Si ajo bisha në shkorret. (*Lahuta* XVII,496-500)

Barefoot and ill-clad the poor Albanian
sleeping on the floor and eating only bread
has neither craft nor profession
and spends his life miserably
like a wild beast in a thicket.

In another passage, Fishta has an Albanian haiduk — the hero of many a folk song — leading a band to loot a Montenegrin house. Says the haiduk:

« Na, se kem' lé,
Terrnakop s'kem'ngulë kurr m'dhé,
As zânë shtiqe, as çilë hendiqe,

Ne vû pêmë, ne kí hardhija:
Hajrin s'na ká pá kurr shpija,
Veç se vrá me Turk e Shkjá... (XXI, 409-14)

« Since we were born
we never seized a pick
to fix a pole, dig a ditch,
plant a tree or prune a vine.
All we did to help our husbandry
was fight with Turks and Slavs.

Migjeni developed such motifs as these in his prose writings, but in a radical, shocking way. A young pregnant woman who has been feeding on cherries for lack of bread gives birth to a child while the visitors congratulate her: « May he thrive begging »! Either a beggar, or a bandit: this is the alternative facing the child when he grows up (« Cherries »). A lovely shepherdess dreams of the bandit while letting herself be deflowered by a less romantic fellow shepherd (« The Bandit's Kiss »). A young highland woman — she could be the shepherdess in the former story — tries her luck in the city where she ends up as a prostitute (« The Story of One of Them »). A child is found frozen to death at dawn in a hut, after having been removed from the sleeping corner by the fireplace in order to make room for the cow, a more important family member (« The Beauty that Kills »). A highland pupil asks his teacher why Albania is so small, little more than a dot on the globe; and the teacher « saves the situation » by answering that Albania is on the contrary big, for if its area is divided among its inhabitants, they will have proportionately more land than the inhabitants of all other European countries (« Zeneli »). Corn is being distributed by government officials to starving highlanders who come from far away. Teeming « like ants around a grain of corn », they stand « servile » and « timid » before « the angels distributing corn », « ridiculously repeating over and over again, 'Yes, Sir!', with altered voices, aping gestures ». Migjeni concludes:

> And when they have taken the corn, they walk in a row up the narrow mountain path — that of their life. And it happens that one of them inadvertently treads on a few grains fallen from a bag with a hole in it which someone walking before him is carrying. A curse is then heard from a third: « Dont't trample them, damn you »! For the twentieth century is the

apotheosis of corn in the nests of the eagles (« The Legend of Corn »).

The sarcasm is ferocious when one thinks that the Albanians, who call themselves Shqiptarë, prefer to interpret their name as a derivative of « shqipe » « eagle », the name thus meaning « the sons of the eagle » — Migjeni's prose poem suggests a vulture instead. In the same year in which Fishta published *The Highland Lute*, the monument of Albanian heroism, Migjeni was writing its epitaph, his anti-heroic prose poem, « The Legend of Corn ». The cycle had come full circle and the times were ripe for another kind of literature.

8. *A Literature of Compensation.*

A brief survey of Albanian literature from its origins to World War II with respect to the most characteristic aspect of Albanian reality points to the conclusion that Albanian literature tends to cover, rather than discover, reality. It is fundamentally a compensatory phenomenon for something lacking. With few exceptions (Variboba, Kamberi, Çajupi), Albanian literature shrinks from realism and clings to romanticism, which takes different forms according to differing circumstances. In De Rada's *Milosao* (1836), the picture of the rural milieu is idyllic in Leopardi's rather than in the classical sense of « idyll ». Frashëri's *Herds and Crops* (1886) offers a romantic solution of the bucolic type, but one that is veined with mysticism. Fishta's kind of romanticism in *The Highland Lute* (1905-7) is epic heroic. Migjeni's portrayal of peasant characters is anti-heroic, but still epic. We shall see that socialist literature does not represent peasants realistically either; at its best, it achieves lyricism, remaining rooted in folklore while at the same time furthering nationalism.

A 19th century Italian writer, Manzoni, forecast the demise of the historical novel — a genre in which he excelled — on the grounds that modern literature tends to do away with romance and portray real events, in keeping with the scientific trend of the human mind towards the discovery of truth [54]. We need not go that far, but if we take realism to be an artistic category best suited for mature minds, not a target certainly, but perhaps a necessary stage in mankind's artistic evolution, we would have to infer that Albanian literature fits the mind of an ethnic group that has not yet reached full maturity. This is said in no derogatory sense, it could even be

[54] *Del romanzo storico* in *Opere* di Alessandro Manzoni II (ed. by Barbi and Ghisalberti), Florence, 1943, pp. 632-6.

a compliment, considering the kind of civilization we are living in. Of the various types surveyed, the bandit is the most common; we might say he is a constant. The bandit can be the mythical « good robber » as found in Variboba; or the haiduk taking to the mountains for not wanting to pay taxes or serve in the army; or the guerrilla fighter of the awakening period of nationalism; or simply the rebellious subject challenging those in power, no matter whether power is national or foreign, feudal or bourgeois. Oral poetry exalts the bandit, and literature has eleborated a multi-faceted type. But rarely has literature pointed out the ultimate cause for the proliferation of this type, which is economic. Heroism and want are the two facets of the same coin in Albanian history, which is that of an adventurous people, originally nomadic, who were cornered in the least accessible part of the Balkan peninsula by foreign invasions. A mode of existence conditioned by the scarcity of arable land, but with plenty of pastures and forests, conditioned a frame of mind which is not congenial with urban civilization and which is characterized by predatory instincts and intolerance of alien authority. The shepherd brigand, who embodies both, became paradigmatic in the oral tradition, from Mujo and Halil in the Gheg cycle of legendary rhapsodies, to Gjoleka and Rrapo Hekali in the Tosk cycle of the Tanzimat epic songs. Literature developed the oral tradition, reaching its monumental expression in *The Highland Lute*. Then Migjeni, an Albanian of alien origin, came and shattered that tradition to pieces. His formula, « either a bandit, or a beggar », offers a key for a sociological explanation of traditional Albanian literature.

It is no accident that the only body of literature in which the type of the beggar is found — and quite inconspicuously at that — is of oriental inspiration, alien to the Albanian mind. The Albanian cannot be a beggar, or a rayah. The recent period of Albanian history is yet another confirmation of that truth. After having rejected the Yugoslav big-brother partnership at the very risk of its survival as an independent nation, communist Albania also rejected the Soviet tutorship which had reduced it to the role of a rayah nation. And today Albania is the maverick of international communism, a bandit nation which is equally taboo to the Soviet Union and the United States. The bandit mode of life has been projected on a national scale.

The homologies between literature and reality could be pursued. The next essay is an investigation in the same sense, focusing on the crucial moment in Albanian literature marked by a qualitative change, the birth of socialist literature.

III.

THE MYTH OF THE OCCIDENT IN THE POETRY OF MIGJENI

1. *The Slavic Spirit Speaking Albanian.*

Albania is a country in which the two principal components of European civilization, the Roman and the Byzantine, intersect. Over the centuries the line of demarcation between these two civilizations has passed through Albania. In so far as it was part of Illyria, the country was under the domination of Rome from the second century B.C. until the sixth century A.D. The invasion of the Balkan peninsula by Slavic peoples prevented Albanian from becoming a Romance language. Then, throughout the Middle Ages, Albania was a Byzantine Slavic area, except for several towns on the Adriatic coast which remained, although not continuously, under the control of various Italian states: the Norman, Suabian and Angevin kingdoms and the republic of Venice. Albania as a political and national entity is a relatively late phenomenon. After the disintegration of the Serbian kingdom of Stephan Dušan during the second half of the 14th century, the first Albanian state was set up with, as its capital, Scutari whose prince, George Balsha, converted to Catholicism. A large part of Northern Albania thus passed under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rome, whereas Southern Albania remained Byzantine Orthodox. To these two civilizations was added, starting with the 15th century when Albania was occupied by the Turks, a third Islamic civilization[1]. Little by little the Albanian people converted to the religion of their conquerors[2]. Customs, especially in the towns, changed along with religion,

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[1] The symbiosis of the three civilizations is to be found in the very person of Scanderbeg, the Albanian national hero, usually — but incorrectly — considered to be a champion of Christianity. George Kastrioti, born to Orthodox parents (his mother was Slavic and he married an Orthodox Albanian princess), converted to Islam in Turkey where, first as a hostage, then as general of the Ottoman army, he spent a great part of his life before returning to his native land to organize the resistance against the Turks. The Catholic Church claims him as one of its sons because of his deference for the Papacy, a political rather than religious event.

[2] Towards the end of Word War II, two thirds of the population were Moslem, the remaining third Orthodox and Catholic. Considering that the Albanian population of Yugoslavia — more than a million, according to official figures —

and many Turkish and Arabic words found their way into Albanian. The cultural symbiosis is apparent in the use of the alphabet: Albanian was written in three alphabets, Latin, Greek and Arabic, until 1908, when a national linguistic congress paved the way for the adoption of the Latin alphabet.

The Albanian poet whith whom we are concerned here is a typical product of this cultural symbiosis. Living between the two world wars (1911-38), his life almost coincides with that of the first phase of the Albanian state, 1912-39. Millosh Gjergj Nikolla (Migjeni is an acronym) was born in Scutari to a family of Slavic origin which had settled in that city towards the second half of the 19th century. His grandfather had been a bricklayer, while his father was able to set up a small candy shop. After attending the Serbian elementary school in Scutari, he went for his secondary studies to Bitola (Manastir), a city in Macedonia. From the gymnasium he went to the Orthodox Seminary there and gained, after five years of theological studies, a diploma which destined him for an ecclesiastical career. He chose instead the post of school teacher in Vrakë, a Serbian village a few miles from Scutari. Shortly afterwards he contracted tuberculosis. Because he could not afford to go to a sanatorium, he asked to be transferred to a region with a healthier climate. He was sent to Pukë, a remote village in the northern mountains [3]. This did not improve his condition. He then decided, upon the urging of his family, to go to Turin where his sister, Olga, was studying at the university, hoping to enroll in the faculty of letters after being cured of his illness. He spent some time in a sanatorium in Turin, from which he was transferred, after an unsuccessful operation, to the Waldensian Hospital of Torre Pellice. He died there on 26 August 1938.

His poetic work, which consists of about forty poems and thirty short stories, narrative sketches and prose poems, was composed between 1934 and 1938. His collection of poems *Vargjet e lira* (Free Verse) was confiscated, but many of his poems and other writings had been published in journals and reviews. The censured edition of 1936 was published posthumously in 1944 and included « Last Songs », written just before his death [4].

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is Moslem to an even higher proportion, three quarters of the Albanian people belong, at least nominally (atheism increased remarkably after World War II) to Islam.

[3] The school in which he taught was a cabin distinguished from the cottages of the peasants only by its larger windows and by its roof which was not covered with straw. It was there I met Migjeni for the first time.

[4] *Vargjet e lira,* Mal'Osmani, Tirana, 1944. The poems and the prose writings

In many ways Migjeni is a pioneer. He is the first to break with the romantic tradition which had lasted exactly a century, since De Rada published, in 1836, *Songs of Milosao*, the first truly artistic work in Albanian literature. To the romantic nationalist tradition, which was still flourishing in the thirties, Migjeni opposed his socialist epic romanticism; he abandoned the obsolete themes and motifs, replacing them with actual ones expressed in a new style. The nationalist post-romantic literature of the period was still able to thrive because the achievement of independence had not changed the structure of Albanian society. Political power was in the hands of a monarch whose methods were very much like those of the last Turkish sultans. The millions of francs that Italy gave the young state in return for her subservience to fascist politics were shared by the royal court and the bureaucratic-military complex which ensured its existence. The leaders of official literature condoned this state of affairs, they raised hymns to the heroic ideals of the nation and the traditional virtues of « the race », but hardly mentioned the existing situation characterized by primitive agriculture, lack of industry, antiquated methods of transportation, inadequate health services, illiteracy. Migjeni belonged to a tiny group of progressive writers who wanted to change that situation. But unlike most of them who thought of themselves as the nation's intellectual vanguard whose role was to provide objective information and corrosive criticism, he considered himself as a missionary whose task was to proclaim a new morality of the future. To found the latter, it was necessary to demolish the cult of heroic ideals, expose the social reality, while at the same time unmask the demagogy of the regime through an appeal not to nationalism but to socialism, not to superficial reform but to revolution.

In the thirties, the period in which Migjeni was writing, only one state had accomplished the revolution: the Soviet Union. It was therefore natural that radicals and left intellectuals should regard the Soviet Union, which was just then transforming itself from an agricultural country into a major industrial power, with sympathy. Communism which seemed to be the new sun that was to regenerate the world had risen in Russia, a Eurasian country. In the West, capitalism

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were later collected in one volume. Gj. Luka edited the third edition, Migjeni: *Vepra,* Tirana, 1954, and S. Luarasi the fourth, Migjeni: *Vepra,* Tirana, 1957, which contains a documented introduction. The texts and various pieces of information used in this essay are taken from Luarasi's edition, to which I also refer in my quotes.

continued to dominate in its most advanced form, imperialism. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, and shortly after Albania [5]. In 1936, civil war broke out in Spain, which became the battle ground for European fascism against the democratic popular forces. Western Europe was definitely orienting itself towards fascism, which seemed to be the only ideology capable of halting the advance of communism. And because fascism established itself in Western Europe while communism dominated part of Eastern Europe and Asia, the political antinomy fascism/communism also became geographical: West versus East.

Migjeni was particularly affected by this antinomy. Born Albanian to a family of Slavic origin, then educated in a Slavic cultural milieu, he made contact again with Albania and the Albanian language and culture as an adult. The language he spoke at home was Serbo-Croatian, and at the seminary he learned Russian [6]. He did not know Albanian well. His texts swarm with spelling mistakes, even elementary ones, and his syntax is far from being typically Albanian. What is true of Italo Svevo's Italian is even truer of Migjeni's Albanian. His faulty language will be made apparent in the process of this essay. A note on his metrics can serve as an introduction to his cultural heterogeneity.

One understands why the octosyllable, the Albanian national verse, never appears in his poetry: this traditional line does not suit a poetry which wants to be anti-traditional and which, for this very reason, prefers to move freely. However, the greater part of *Free verse* is not in free verse [7]. Traditional elements such as the stanza, usually the quatrain, and rhyme, although often alternating with assonance, are used. Since assonance is common in folk Albanian poetry, one could interpret Migjeni's use of assonance as proof of his stylistic non-conformism. One must, one the other hand, recognize that his use of assonance also derives from his technical difficulty in rhyming. Indeed, when he employs rhyme in fixed forms such as the sonnet, the results are disastrous [8].

More important in this respect are considerations of style. What

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[5] In 1935, Mussolini threatened to ocupy the country and to this end sent a contingent of the Italian navy into the waters of Durazzo.

[6] He also knew a little Greek and Latin, and he could read French.

[7] *Vargjet e lira* is usually translated « Free Verse ». The title is ambivalent and concerns less the metrics of the verses than their character of protest: they are verses meant to help in the liberation of an exploited and enslaved people.

[8] « Spring Sonnet » is an example. The other fourteen-line composition in the volume, « Song of Youth », can scarcely be called a sonnet on account of its defective metrics.

distinguishes Migjeni from every other Albanian writer is his taste for metaphor, which is in his work hyperbolic and eccentric. Metaphor is the basis of poetic language, no literature is without it. But metaphor in Albanian poetry is usually explicative and illustrative, close to the simile. The Albanian people, who tend to be realistic and practical, are inclined towards a discursive style, without violent transitions or strident contrasts. On the contrary, Migjeni does not proceed by degrees but in leaps and bounds, the metaphor serving as his spring-board. One could say that the metaphor is his natural form of expression. As an example, let us look at « Parade of Autumn ». The title suggests that autumnal nature unfolds before the eyes of the poet as in a film. Indeed his eyes are turned into a moving camera which follows the contours of the countryside. This transference of eye movements to the movements of things shows that Migjeni is naturally given to metaphor, which is precisely the figure of transference through resemblance.

Autumn in nature and autumn on our faces.
The indolent wind sighs, the lusterless sun languishes,
the sick soul languishes in our breasts,
faded life trembles in the branches of a poplar-tree.

The yellow colors play in the last dance,
mad desire of the leaves which die one by one.
Our joys, our pleasures, our desires
fall one by one into the mud of autumn.

An oak-tree is reflected in the tear of the sky,
it struggles, bloodless, in an immense passion:
« I want to live »! « It takes a deep breath,
rends the air tempestuously, and finally breaks into sobs.

The horizon joins the funeral procession
fallen in the fog, the damp leaves and the boughs
lament, implore. But in vain, he knows he is finished,
tomorrow he will die... Is there salvation anywhere?

The eye and the heart are full of grief
in the burial hour when the veins are silent.
And the tomb rises to the highest skies
with a cry of despair which lingers painfully.

Autumn in nature and autumn on our faces.
Weep, desires, children of poor devils,
mourn and weep over the corpses
which adorn the dry branches of Autumn.

An analogy is immediately established, through the concept of languor, between the « faded life » of a poplar-tree and the « sick soul » of the poet. The motif of mortal illness is continued in the second stanza, while in the next the metaphor develops into objective correspondence. The fourth stanza further elaborates the correspondence between poet and oak-tree. In the fifth, death is projected into the vault of the sky through a metonymy (« the tomb »). The last stanza takes up the first image in a crescendo in which the metaphors overlap.

Differences in style indicate differences in temperament and culture [9]. Thus, a hyperbolic style betrays the lack of a sense of proportion, resulting in fluctuation between extremes. The eroticism of Migjeni shows just such a fluctuation: his women are either goddesses or prostitutes, ideal projections or dejections of the real. Sensuality is sublimated into compassion or worship, the cries of the flesh soften into sighs and languors. The sublimation of eroticism, alien to the Albanian writers as a rule, is often found in Russian literature — one remembers Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot,* torn between the beauty of Aglae and the sensuality of Nastasia. Another characteristic of Migjeni, messianism, is foreign to Albanian psychology, but familiar to the Slavic mind. Albanian poets think of Scanderbeg when they want to idealize a hero. One would search in vain through Albanian literature for motifs like those of the « new genius » [10] who comes to save the fatherland, or of the « superman » destined to regenerate humanity [11].

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[9] It should be added that metaphor, which is sparingly used in Albanian folk poetry, has a role in Slavic folk poetry at once more extensive and more intensive. The simile is metaphorical in the beginning of the famous Serbo-Croatian epic song, « Hasanaginica »: « What is that which whitens in the green wood? / Could it be the snow, could it be the swans? / If it was the snow, it would have melted away, / if i was the swans, they would have flown away. / It is not the snow, it is not the swans, / it is the tents of Hasan Aga ». The leitmotif of another well-known Serbo-Croatian epic song, « The Death of the Mother of the Seven Jugović », is an example of a generative metaphor, i.e. a metaphor which gives birth to another: « But the mother had a strong heart, / she shed no tear from her heart ». « Strong heart » is equivalent to « heart of stone ». The popular poet uses the metaphor of the « cracked heart » in conclusion, to render the death of the mother resulting from her great sorrow.

[10] An example is the beginning and the ending of « Let the Man Be Born »: « Let a man be born / from the bosom of our land drowned in hot tears, / from the kernel of our soul which melts with desire / for a new genius! » « Let him light our consciuosness with love / for a new idea, for a noble ideal, / for a national rebirth, just and happy ».

[11] For the Superman see the text on p. 155.

One can, therefore, assert that if Migjeni belongs to Albanian literature by virtue of the language in which he writes, his style and frame of mind are essentially Slavic. We are confronted with a phenomenon of cultural hybridism: the Slavic spirit speaking Albanian. It is thus not surprising to see the relation between East and West occupying a special place in Migjeni's poetry. Let us first determine this relation historically.

2. *The Failure of Occidentalism.*

In 1934, when Migjeni began to publish his works, occidentalism was a prevalent theme of discussion among Albanian intellectuals. Under increasing pressure from them, King Zog constituted in 1932 a cabinet of « youngsters » who had been educated in Europe and who were expected to transform Albania from the backward and still « oriental » country it was into an « occidental » one. The experiment ended in complete failure. The monarch was the very incarnation of Byzantinism, his occidentalism only a pose. In 1935 a revolt, led by some intellectuals and officers, broke out in Fier. Shortly after, Mirash Ivanaj, the most respected intellectual in the government, the author of an anticlerical scholastic reform, resigned. The country was experiencing a grave economic crisis. There was little work, food was expensive, Italy had suspended its economic aid, the state treasury was nearly empty and civil servants, a privileged class, received their salaries very irregularly. In February 1936, in Korçë, workers and students demonstrated under the slogan « bread and work », following a workers' strike in Kuçovë, an oil-producing center. The bourgeoisie felt the impact of the crisis [12], artisans closed their shops, the peasants had nothing left to eat, misery reigned in the towns [13].

Occidentalism was a favored topic in the Albanian press of the time [14]. The slogan, cleverly disguised the nature of Albania's real

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[12] Cfr. the narrative sketch, « Give Us Our Daily Bread! »

[13] Migjeni treats the theme of urban misery in various narrative sketches: « Report on Recession », « Forbidden Apple », « Sir, Do You Want Some Charcoal? » « Little Luli », « Ask God for Charity ». The misery of the peasants is the subjects of the prose poems, « The Legend of Corn », « Cherries », « The Beauty that Kills ».

[14] The April 1936 editorial of *Leka*, the influential periodical of the Jesuits of Scutari, is entitled « Lindje e Prendim: Orientalizem e Oksidentalizem », and contains the following passage: « Here we take no stand either for or against the dictatorship, which we do not discuss. We agree, however, that — *salvo meliori* — the latter is the form of government which we need [...] Take note that

problems, economic and cultural backwardness, by attributing them to the country's « oriental » heritage. The solution would lie, consequently, in a decisive veering towards the West, that is to say in the adoption of an occidental form of government. What form precisely? For Western Europe had different kinds of government, ranging from socialdemocracy to fascism. The conservatives inclined towards a constitutional monarchy with a king other than Zog [15]. The moderates preferred a republic. The ultra-nationalists and the radicals of the left favored totalitarian solutions. Hitler already had his admirers among the « Deutsche Kultur » acolytes. Much more numerous were Mussolini's sympathizers who invoked the common interests of Albania and Italy based on geographical proximity. Not lacking were the partisans of a military dictatorship such as that of Atatürk, on the grounds that Albania was closer culturally to Turkey.

The failure of the occidental experience encouraged the radicals of the left who began to organize. Their criticism in the press turned into attacks — the government tightened its censorship [16]. Leftists made use, under the circumstances, of the slogan of occidentalism, which had become meanwhile the common denominator for the opposition to the autocratic regime. However, they used it mostly to mask their subversive activity, whose object was the overthrowing of the absolute monarchy and its replacement by a socialist regime [17]. For the most

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we are opposed, neither to strong authorithy — which, on the contrary, seems to us necesary — no to dictatorship; but we criticize the reasons that are given, without much skill, in their favor » (p. 149). The tendencies of the periodical had been outlined in two articles by its editor, Zef (Giuseppe) Valentini, published in July 1934, « Prishja e rilindja e korporacionit » (« Destruction and Rebirth of the Corporation ») and « Si do të jetë korporacioni i rí? » (« What Will the New Corporation Be Like ») in which the model proposed is that of the corporative Italian fascist state. The political expansion of Italy towards the East is supported in the article « Albania and the Fair of the Orient » by Gjikam (an acronym of Gjon Kamsi?): « [The Fair of the Orient:] a name, a historical concept, in the service of a goal that has been forgotten, but which has been placed on the nation's agenda by regenerative fascism: to unite the Occident and the Orient across this port of Apulia [Bari] » (*Leka*, October 1936).

[15] In its June 1933 editorial, *Leka* takes a position in favor of a monarchy: « One cannot throw a royal crown in the mud » (p. 171).

[16] Jn 1934, *Flaga* appeared four times, *Jehona* only twice; *Illyria*, a literary journal with avant-garde pretensions, to which many young intellectuals, including Migjeni, contributed, was suspended by a special decree of the Directory of the Press in 1937. A center-left review, *Rilindja*, and a leftist one, *Bota e re*, published between 1935 and 1936, were also suppressed.

[17] Typical in this sense is an article by Harbuti [Selim Shpuza] in *Rilindja* (Jan. 1936), « Misioni i Oksidentalizmit në Shqipní », which provoked the response of *Leka* (April 1936) mentioned in note 14. *Hylli i dritës*, another important Scu-

enlightened among them, occidentalism signified nothing more than capitalism and Christianity, the two powers that constituted the structure and ideology of the bourgeois order dominating in the West. The struggle, pursued under the banner of social progress and centering on how to develop industry and communications, bring about agrarian reform, improve public health, eliminate illiteracy [18], was directed against the classes and groups which supported the autocratic power: the bureaucracy, the military, the landlords and the clergy [19].

The work of Migjeni orchestrates these major themes, raising them from the level of journalism to that of social poetry. His originality lies in his having opened the gates of Albanian literature to social problems. Having emerged from the oblivion to which he had been condemned during the occupation of the country when his writings circulated on typewritten or hand-copied sheets among students and workers, he was promoted to the rank of a national poet, when the country became socialist, on account of the social protest in his work. His occidental sympathies were prudently ignored, and his cultural hybridism which gave rise to a personal drama informing his whole poetry went unnoticed.

How can one explain his passion for the West? First of all, by his desire to live a life that had not been lived, a recurrent motif in his work [20]. For an Albanian, the West begins on the other side of the Adriatic, and Scutari, Migjeni's native town, has always been

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tarene periodical, edited by the Franciscans, contains, in its January 1937 issue, an unsigned article which ends with this passage: « All ideology contrary to the moral and social principles of occidental Christian culture can only be fatal to humanity. Hispania docet! » The allusion is to Spanish socialism and the Spanish Civil War. The same issue contains an article by Krist Maloki, « Oriental or Occidental ».

[18] Social and socialist novels were translated: Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1933), Gorky's *The Mother* (1934), E. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* » (1935); and so were historical works and anticlerical scientific vulgarisations: Renan's *The Life of Christ* (Chapter, « The Life of Christ ») and A. M. Lewis' *Science and Religion* (both in 1935).

[19] Almost all lay periodicals, of the center or of the left, polemized with the clerical reviews of Scutari, *Hylli i dritës* and *Leka.*

[20] The motif of the unlived life, treated in the epistolary prose « Greetings from the Village » as well as in the two poems, « To and fro on the Swing of Fate » and « Nostalgia of Youth », is given expression also in the prose poem « The Song of the Foreign City », which contains the following passage: « You who come from abroad, leave off your melancholy, your nostalgia for your country — if you have one — [...] Look for happiness, the nectar of life, for life's gall comes from life itself ». It should be noticed that the person addressed here, most likely the poet himself, is not sure he has a country.

an Albanian gate to the West. Returning to Scutari after a long stay in a typically Balkan city like Bitola, he must have experienced a certain uneasiness as a result of his Slavic origin and Byzantine education, which made him more vulnerable to the fascination of the West. Family tradition and educational background made him gravitate towards the East, where he had his roots, while his aspirations pushed him towards the West, where his dream lay. His sentimental leanings appear in many of his poems and most conspicuously in the last two compositions of « Songs of Youth ». In « Songs of the Occident » it is his ideological concerns that are dominant, which explains why the poet classed them separately. A glance at the contents of the volume, following its division into chapters, shows clearly its ideological character.

3. *Decadent Verse.*

The volume begins with a « Preface of Prefaces », in which the author announces his apostasy. It is divided into six parts: « Songs of Resurrection », « Songs of Misery », « Songs of the Occident », « Separate Song », « Songs of Youth », and « Last Songs ». The order is logical, not chronological. Let us see what this logic is. « Songs of Resurrection » are calls to the nation to « awake » and « throw off its chains ». The necessity of revolt is justified by the profound material and moral misery of the people: « Songs of Misery » make up the largest group in the volume, seventeen poems. The poet protests against the present state of affairs, makes himself judge, avenger, pronounces charges, launches invectives. Often his helpless rage exhausts itself in cries of distress, and sometimes, his illness contributing to it, in despairing sobs (as in « Parade of Autumn »). « Songs of Misery » are followed by « Songs of the Occident », the first of which (there are two in all) is a kind of socialist manifesto, a hymn to the revolution which will change the face of the world. But in the other poem the enthusiasm gives way to melancholy meditations, and the Occident extolled in the preceding poem shows its other face, that of exploitation. « Separate Song » is a categorical refusal of the seductive call of « old dreams »: nationalism and religion. For the disillusioned poet there is nothing left but love, which he invokes passionately as a last refuge. The tone becomes subjective in « Songs of Youth », which are love lyrics. The subjectivity is more intense in « Last Songs », in which the poet, confronting his imminent death, rebels against his fate, proclaims his desire to live, confessing at the same tim that « life little by litte / all the feelings / brands

with treason ». He does not repudiate his mission as a socialist poet, while recognizing his failure in the face of the prevalent apathy of the people.

In such a context, « Songs of the Occident » represent the summit of a parable in which subjective and objective elements converge. This explains the complexity of these poems, which we shall analyze after we have read the last two poems of « Songs of Youth », where the concept of the Occident is easily and unequivocally identified [21]. Let us begin by reading the first poem, « To and fro on the Swing of Fate ».

Hidhet e përhidhet në shrregullen e fatit
djalosh'i Arbënís,
hidhet e përhidhet në përndim mbrapa malit
me hovin e rinís
zogu i lirís.
Në shrregullen e fatit, ndër këto fluturime
mâ shpejt i rreh zemra edhe merr drithtime
se qiellnat e hueja premtojnë gëzime t'ambla
nepër shkalla të hueja, nën të ngjyrta llampa,
premtojnë hyjnizimin në vallen e dëfrimit:
femën-mashkull rrokun si dy vetë që mbyten,
kin për të mbramen herë qindenji herë puthen,
e mbrenda krahnorit gati të pëlsasë zemra,
nsa majet e këpucvet shkarravisin germa
të tanë natën e lume deri në të lém t'agimit.
Për njenín ky gëzim, për tjetrin gzim tjetër...
ndoshta vllime librash, atom ose kompas —
fundi i fundit shkundet ai djalosh i vjetër,
nga melankolija fillon të vuej pa masë.
Dh'atëherë naltmadhnija e tij mbret Dyshimi
futet në zemër, në trû, në jetën e të riut,
msheftas fillon lojën tinzake, si krymbi
në thalbin e mollës... e syni i të riut
merr hijën e vendit, hijën e nji murit
mbrapa të cilit rrahin zemrat e makinat
me krijue nji jetë tjetër, njeriun e gurit...
po, nji ringjallje mbi të vjetra kalbsinat.
Syn'i të riut merr hijën e atij murit.
Hidhet e përhidhet

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[21] The poems are missing from the confiscated 1936 edition which could not be printed entirely.

zogu i lirís,
por edhe bjen ku lidhet djalosh'i Arbënís.

To and fro on the swing of fate
the Albanian youth
swings towards the occident behind the mountain
with the leap of youth,
the bird of liberty.
On the swing of fate during these flights
his heart beats faster, he shivers at the thought
that foreign skies promise sweet delights
on other staircases under colored lamps,
they promise ecstasies in the rapture of dance:
man and woman clinging as if drowning,
embracing for the hundred and first time as if for the last,
their hearts beating in their chests to the point of breaking,
the points of their shoes tracing arabesques
all night until dawn.
This pleasure for one, that for another,
perhaps volumes of books, the atom or the compass.
Finally this old young man awakes
and begins to suffer from melancholy.
Then His Majesty King Doubt
creeps into the heart, brain, life of the young man,
and begins his treacherous game, like the worm
at the heart of the apple... And the young man's eye
takes on the color of the place, the shadow of a wall
behind which throb hearts and machines
for the creation of another life, the man of stone...
yes, a resurrection out of the old decay.
The young man's eye takes on the shadow of that wall.
To and fro on the swing of fate
the bird of liberty swings
to fall back where the young Albanian is in chains.

The poet's « soul » lies bare in this sentimental effusion. « The bird of liberty » (the poet) takes « flight » « towards the occident », landing in a European city (« foreign skies ») described as an urban center, at once industrial (« machines ») and cultural (« volumes of books, the atom or the compass ») and where the joys of life abound [22].

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[22] The « foreign skies » (for « the foreign city » see note 20) almost certainly refer to Turin. At the time many Albanians were studying in that city, including

Such a place is the exact opposite of Albania, a backward country, semi-feudal, without industry, culture, amusements and, above all, without liberty, a country in which life resembles a prison (« in chains ») [23]. The poet escapes from this prison by means of fantasy, he consoles himself with dreams. Before his eyes pass cinematic images [24], marble staircases leading to spacious rooms brilliantly lit, where dancing goes on until dawn. But the poet knows that such an enviable civilization and culture is realized at the price of the suffering of those whom hard work separates from society as if by a prison « wall ». He also knows that the class barriers which divide mankind into exploiters and exploited can only be demolished by revolutionaries whose hearts have been toughened by suffering (« the man of stone »). Only revolution can bring about « resurrection out of the old decay ». That thought brings him back to reality, and he finds himself where fate has summoned him, together with other young Albanians, « in chains ».

Migjeni must have composed these lines in Scutari, or else in Vrakë, his gaze fixed on the West towards the setting sun. « Behind the mountain » is the Adriatic with Italy beyond. The poet's initial mood is fairly close to that of Leopardi in « L'infinito »: « e quinci il mar da lungi e quindi il monte ». In both the leap of the imagination compensates for a passionate desire to live which the milieu curbs. But whereas the imagination of the Italian poet quickly withdraws into the past, Migjeni's imagination is projected towards the future. The one takes pleasure in evoking nostalgically the memories of his childhood, while the other is completely closed to memory. But this poem really stresses the present, not the future, and the motif of *carpe diem* overshadows that of revolution. The pleasures of which the poet dreams are those of the « dolce vita », while « the man of stone » derives from Nietzsche [25]. The concept of the superman who overturns all values has undoubtedly a revolutionary charge, but Nietszche's revolution has nothing to do with the socialist revolution — Migjeni's sympathy for the philosopher is mediated, most likely, by his apostasy.

Olga, the poet's sister. Turin was then the most advanced city in Italy, a center of industry (the FIAT factory) and culture (a famous university and a polytechnic school) with a liberal civic tradition including the council factory movement.

[23] The image of life as prison occurs frequently in Migjeni's work. One of his poems is called « Song of the Prisoner ».

[24] Migjeni loved the cinema.

[25] The motif is developed in « The Forms of the Superman » (see p. 155), hardness being precisely the *forma mentis* characteristic of the superman.

The line, « swings towards the occident behind the mountain », could equally well have been translated as « swings towards the sun setting behind the mountain », since in Albanian « prendim » means both occident and sunset. The poet plays with this ambivalence, as can be ascertained by reading « Nostalgia of Youth », the last poem of « Songs of Youth ».

MALLI RINUER

Valët muzikore flutrojnë nga përndimi,
shkrepen e përtrihen
për muret e dhomës seme,
edhe mandej dridhen
mbrenda në zemrën teme
dhe sgjojnë ndjesina që mblue ka hini.

Ndjesitë e mija me valët muzikore
shkëmbejnë puthje të nxehta
po si dy dashnorë
e pa mshirë shëgjeta
më therë në krahnor
edhe më merr malli për jetë mâ gazmore.

Malli rinuer për jetë mâ shkumbuese
flên pa fat në mue,
nji tingull përndimi
âsht ngushllim për mue
kur më mshtjell mashtrimi
me melankolinë e vet aq trishtuese.

Tingujt miqëdashës që në dhomën
më falin rythmin
e nji dansit të largët
më kujtojnë përqafimin
e çiftave të shkathët
që sjellen hirshëm nepër drrasa të gëdhenme.

NOSTALGIA OF YOUTH

The sounds of music take flight towards the occident,
They break bouncing back
against the walls of my room,
then vibrate in my heart

awakening there
feelings buried under the ashes.

My feelings and the sound of music
exchange ardent kisses
like two lovers,
and the pitiless dart
pierces my breast
and I have nostalgia for more joyous life.

A youthful nostalgia for a more exciting life
sleeps in me without hope,
a sound of the occident
is my consolation
when the illusion overwhelms me
with its saddening melancholy.

The friendly sounds which bring
the rhythm of a distant dance
to my room
remind me of loving couples
who dance with agility and grace
on the polished floors.

The first line, « The sounds of music take flight towards the occident », might have been translated as « The sounds of music take flight towards the setting sun ». In the third stanza, « nji tingull përndimi » [26] « a sound of the occident » is almost a literal translation of the Serbo-Croatian « večernji zvon », the title of his favorite song which he used to sing in Russian, according to his sister [27]. Now « a sound of the occident », if interpreted as « a sound of sunset », recalls « a sound of evening bells » (« zvono » in Serbo-Croatian means « bell »), a meaning which is also implicit in the phrase under consideration. Indeed, « bell » is found, although in a different context, in « Wandering Souls », which we shall read soon. In « Nostalgia of Youth » music is a substitute for eroticism: « My feelings and the sounds of music/exchange ardent kisses », says the poet. This is a case of appeasing sexual desire through art, an art in which the image replaces the real thing, the signifier the signified: the aesthetic experience counterfeits life. The decadent inspiration is manifest in

[26] Migjeni writes « përndim », a syncopated form, used by some writers from central Albania. The normal Gheg form is « prendim », « përëndim » in Tosk.

[27] *Vepra,* p. 16.

the very title of the poem: « mall » means « desire » in general, but in the Scutarene dialect it signifies a particular kind of desire in which pleasure is mingled with sadness (« malli i atdheut » « nostalgia for the homeland »). We have come across the oxymoron « old young man » in the preceding composition, and we can therefore interpret « nostalgia of youth » as the state of mind of a young man who experiences the present as belonging to the past: a feeling of living death, of cadaveric life, typically decadent. It is true that the poet wrote lines such as these in the shadow of his imminent death [28]. The fact, however, remains that decadent typically « crepuscolari » elements are part of his poetry; they must be taken into account for a correct evaluation of his poetry in general, and for a full understanding of « Song of the Occident » in particular. We do not know the date of the two poems of « Songs of Youth », which are, most likely, posterior to « Songs of the Occident », the language and metrics of the latter [29] being less developed than that of the two poems under consideration (one also notices that « përndim » is not capitalized in the latter, an indication that the myth of the Occident has undergone a certain depreciation with time). But we know that one of the two poems of « Songs of the Occident », « Wandering Souls », which also has a decadent inspiration, was the first to be published by Migjeni. A current of decadentism runs through all Migjeni's poetry, parallel to the revolutionary current which is the more important. We first give the text of « Wandering Souls », in which the two antithetic elements are found intermingled.

SHPIRTËNT SHTEGTARË

Mramë nji erë e ftoftë, acarr fryni nga ana e malevet,
i shkundi shpirtënt tonë — e bashkë me gjethë të kësaj vjeshte
i muer andej kah dielli hijën si të përgjakët u a lëshon zallevet
— në Përndim, ku shtret e shkimet drita në pamundsín e vet.

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[28] Migjeni was not the only young Albanian poet to die of tuberculosis. Before him Helenau (Kol Mirdita), and then Platonicus (Veli Stafa), both from Scutari, suffered the same fate. One can speak of a current of consumptive poetry in the thirties, which continued into the forties: another Scutarene poet, Gaspër Pali, also died of tuberculosis in 1943. His *Hyjt mbi greminë* (Stars Over the Abyss) was published in 1959, but several poems had already appeared in the periodical *Fryma* in 1944.

[29] The metrics of « Songs of the Occident » consists of quatrains composed of long, verset-like lines, with no fixed number of syllables and irregular rhyme scheme, rhyme and assonance being interchangeable. For the language see note 35.

Enden shpirtënt tonë nepër vise të Përndimit të mrekullueshëm,
bâjnë të fala dhe met'hane vendeve të shuguruem,
e të përtrimë ndër fluide të hekurit e të zjarmit — adhurueshëm
e me nji credo gëzojnë qiellën me çagjë e të tymuem...

në cilen, diku në skâj merimanga fatin trillon
vetes dhe njerzís poshtë, që damaret i rrahin
(si të rrahunt trompete në vorresë) — ndërsa tue qá kumbon
e thret kumbon'e fabrikës, i njimijti fishkllim si nji fsham shkyn
ajrin.

Shpirtënt tonë me nji dashní tragjike ato vise i duejnë,
n'etër të kulluet u bâjnë flî ndjenjat e vet mâ të holla.
E në nesërmen fatale kundrojnë nji horizont me njolla...
Shtegtarë të mërguem, shpirtënt tonë n'origjinë po kthejnë.

WANDERING SOULS

Last night an icy wind blew from the mountains,
shook our souls, carried them with the autumn leaves
towards the shores that the sun covers with a bloody shadow,
to the Occident, where the light exhausts itself, powerless.

Our souls wander in the countries of the marvelous Occident,
greeting and revering the consecrated sites,
then regenerated in the fluid of iron and fire gladden
with their cries of adoration the smoky, sooty sky.

There in a corner the spider weaves its destiny
and that of humanity whose veins throb like
a drum in the cemetery, while the factory bell tolls
a knell, the siren rends the air, wailing again and again.
Our souls love those sites with a tragic love,
sacrificing to them in pure ether the tenderest feelings.
On the fatal morrow we see a horizon full of stains...
After the exile our wandering souls return to their origin.

Because « Wandering Souls » comes at the head of Migjeni's literary production, the poem is very important for the reconstruction of his poetic itinerary. It is preceded shortly in time by an epistolary prose, « Greetings from the Village », which can be considered as its

matrix [30]. This prose, written in Vrakë, is addressed to a colleague in Scutari. The poet envies the lot of his friend who lives in town, in the city of his heart, « the lover of high mountains, of cold streams and of the dreaming lake in which, on clear mornings, she bathes her shadow ». The fact the poet is so near to the city and yet separated from it makes him sad. But the sadness does not derive only from personal considerations: « I suffer with the child whose father can not buy him a toy. I suffer with the young man who burns with unslacked sexual desire, I suffer with the middle-aged man drowning in the apathy of life, I suffer with the old man who trembles at the prospect of death, I suffer with the peasant struggling with the soil, I suffer with the worker crushed by iron, I suffer with the sick suffering from all the diseases of the world [...] I suffer with man ». To the friend who had misinterpreted the nature of his sadness, he replies: « No, I admire Schopenhauer's style [...] but I am not a pessimist, because I believe in the strength of man, I believe in the superman ». In other words, he prefers Nietzsche to Schopenhauer. The conclusion of the epistolary prose introduces the theme of « Wandering Souls »: « I turn towards the occident, I trample the tender grass; bitter and sarcastic thoughts seethe in my head. The green nature around me resembles a whore in a brothel, with a provocative decolletage. The lake continues its mad dreams of One Thousand and One Nights, the mountains rest in their ridiculous silence, on high an old sun, a thousand, five thousand years old [shines]. The only desire that I feel at this moment is to laugh in derision and to stick out my tongue at this sun that sets behind the mountains with so much indifference ».

Considering the short interval which separates the publication of this prose composition from that of « Wandering Souls », we may infer that the latter was composed in Vrakë in the spring of 1934, only a few months after the poet had begun teaching in that village. On his return to the country towards the end of 1932, Migjeni had applied for a scholarship to study abroad. He did not obtain the scholarship which would have enabled him to continue his studies in a European city, but obtained instead the post of school teacher in a minoritarian Serbian village. His first year of teaching, 1933-34, coincided with the nationalization and secularization of the Albanian school system. The poet was in complete agreement with the policy of secularization, but the policy of nationalization created a problem

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[30] *Illyria*, 27 May 1934. « Wandering Souls » appeared in the same review the following month (17 June).

of conscience. Teaching in a Serbian enclave according to the directions of the new policy amounted to becoming the government's instrument for denationalizing that enclave. The Yugoslav Consulate in Scutari, which pressed Migjeni not to accept the post, could only view as treason the service of one of its former scholarship-holders of Slavic origin who injured Yugoslav nationalist interests.

We can imagine how the young man felt. « Greetings from the Village » shows no traces of internal conflict. But a letter written at about the same time as the former and addressed to the same friend, insists on the repudiation of « compromise » in the name of total sincerity [31]. In « Wandering Souls » the poet speaks of « tragic love ». The last line of the poem, « After the exile our wandering souls return to their origin », gives a clue. « Origin » is first of all a metonymy for « reality »: the poet returns to it after letting his « soul » « wander » in « the countries of the marvelous Occident ». The word has an ethnic as well as geographic connotation. Not only has the poet's dream of continuing his studies in the West been frustrated, but he cannot even remain in Scutari — a sort of compensation — and has ended a school teacher in a Serbian village: his Slavic origin seems to be his condemnation. The private drama is complicated by an ideological dilemma, his ambivalence for the West. Industrial civilization (« the fluid of iron and fire ») which has brought about the superiority of the West, is approaching the hour of trial: « the factory bell tolls a knell », the siren is « wailing ». The « spider » of capitalism which has trapped Europe in its webb is itself a prisoner within it, a contradiction that only the proletarian revolution will resolve. The poet's thinking suffers the convulsions of an insect caught in a spider's web. To subordinate socialist faith (« sacrificing [...] the tenderest feelings ») to the bourgeois desire for enjoyment, to cherish in his imagination the dream of life in a modern city, knowing that it is there that the proletariat is most exploited, to shut his eyes to the class struggle between exploiters and exploited destined to become worse until the final explosion (« the horizon full of [bloody] stains » of « the fatal morrow »), is that not a betrayal of revolution? He must renounce his « tragic love » for the West, abandon empty dreams, make contact again with rude reality.

We have so far interpreted the two dimensions, ethnic and political, of the key word « origin », but we can go even further and uncover a third metaphysical dimension. We have already come across evidence in Migjeni's works of metaphysical thought coming from

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[31] The letter is dater 14 Avril 1934 (*Vepra*, p. 213-14).

Nietzsche, and « the fatal morrow » in the last stanza could be interpreted as signifying cosmic rather than historical catastrophe. In « Resignation », one of the poems in « Songs of Misery », we read:

> We have found consolation in our tears.
> Misery was given to us as a gift
> together with life.
> Because this whole world is only a wound
> in the bosom of the universe
> where the condemned creature crawls along,
> his will crushed in the fist of a giant.

The reading of Schopenhauer has left, after all, some trace in Migjeni's thought [32]. With respect to a text such as this, « the return to the origin » takes on metaphysical overtones, « origin » meaning original cosmic pain. Later on Migjeni will be able to eliminate from his poetry metaphysical concepts, the residue of his theological training. But it must be admitted that « Wandering Souls » is another poem — as the title itself suggests — thoroughly steeped in a decadent at-

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[32] The Albanian Communist writers who claim Migjeni as a forerunner are often embarassed by such poems, whose inspiration is by no means Marxist. The French translation made by Kol Luka (Migjeni: *Poèmes*. Seghers, Paris, 1965) omits five poems, « Resignation », « The New Spirit », « To and from on the Swing of Fate », « Unhappy Inspiration », « Misunderstood Song », in which the decadent spirit is most marked; in many poems, entire lines have been eliminated, or translated tendenciously (an example is « Song of the Occident », presented as a diatribe against the West). S. Luarasi felt it his duty to specify, in a note at the end of his edition, that in poems like « The Forms of the Superman » and « Prayer » are reflected « influences alien to Migjeni's opinions » (*Vepra*, p. 220). In fact, Migjeni's ideology is made of discordant, and often contradictory, elements, as we shall soon see. At this point we must listen to the author himself. To a Trotskyist friend, A. Stefi, who had warned him that the communists would not forgive poems like « The Forms of the Superman », he replies: « My work has a combative character, but for practical reasons, and taking into account our particular conditions, I must maneuver in disguise. I cannot explain these things to the [communist] groups, they must understand them themselves. The publication of my works is dictated by the necessities of the social situation through which we are passing. As for myself, I consider my work to be a contribution to the union of the groups. André, my work will be achieved if I manage to live a little longer » (*Vepra*, p. 47-8). According to this text, names like that of Nietzsche serve to hide the real nature of the work which is engagé. But Migjeni also says that he considers his work to be a contribution to the union of the Albanian communist groups, divided at that time by divergences in theory and strategy. And if we take his assertion minimizing the importance of those divergences to be authentic — which could be questioned, if we take into account the belated date of the friend's testimony — then we have to conclude that the poet's statement betrays a certain political immaturity — his poetic innocence.

mosphere: « autumn leaves », « light which exhausts itself, powerless », « exiled souls » in « the countries of the marvelous Occident ». Migjeni's first poem stands apart from other poems of the time, pastiches of decadent European models, only on account of its higher artistic potential [33]. The other poem, « Song of the Occident », which we are now ready to analyze, is totally different.

4. *Apotheosis of the Revolution.*

KANGA E PËRNDIMIT

Kangë Përndimi, kangë njeriu të dehun nga besimi në vete...
Kanga e tij nji fé tjetër, me tempuj të tjerë, me meshë solemne,
ku prej mëngjezit deri në mbramje shkrihen ndjesitë, trûtë njerzore
n'apotheozën e hekurit; shpirtënt përshkohen në tymore

të cilat në fishkllim i përqeshen zotit të vjetër edhe qiellit
e me ré të ndyt' tymi të dendun ndriçimin i a vrasin diellit.
Fé tjetër, fé e çmendun e Përndimit të mrekullueshëm...
I egzaltuem shklet njeriu në delirium të pakuptueshëm.

Dëgjon zânin q'i thotë feja. Plagos qiellën, e çpon tokën,
i shkynë horizontet e bardhë, xhveshë natyrën — i a heq kotllën.
Kult'i tij — kult i xhveshun! Nuk i a brén mâ trûtë enigmi—
e varros, mbi varr i a vê nji shêj përbuzje o nderimi.

Kangë Përndimi, kangë të dehun nga besimi në vete...
Kanga e tij shpres'e bukur, me flatra, të nji tjetër jete,
në të cilën dielli do ndrrojë udhën: ka për t'u lind nga Përndimi
— por deh! nga lumnija tash humb kokën rruzullimi.

Me nji « tango » qejfi tash i a ngatron fijet zotit të vjetër,
ka me i a skandalizue të birtë në planetë të tjetër.
Kangë Përndimi, kangë njeriu të dehun nga besimi në vete...
Le të dëgjojmë kangën që mshtillet në shllung'avulli në pika djerse.

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[33] The following passage from D. Shuteriqi's poem « The Singer Awakened », (*Songs of Early Youth*, 1935) shows striking affinities with « Wandering Souls »: « See the setting sun / which rises from the bosom of the sea, caressed / by the song of sea and by a crimson mist. / On the lowered brow, blackened by the soot of life, / the boreal crystals no longer shine. / The singer no longer loses himself in contemplation. In front of the real sounds of life / he no longer drifts off into dreams ».

SONG OF THE OCCIDENT

Song of the Occident, song of man drunk with faith in himself.
His song, another religion, with other temples, high masses,
where from morning until night human brains and feelings melt
in the apotheosis of iron, souls filter out of the smoke stacks,

their whisttling mocks the old god and the sky,
their thick dirty smoke dulls the brightness of the sun.
Another religion, mad religion of the marvelous Occident.
Man walks exalted in an inconceivable delirium.
the earth,

He listens to what his religion tells him, wounds the sky, pierces
tears the white horizons, lays nature bare, removes her clothing.
His cult, a naked cult, the enigma no longer gnaws at his brain.
He buries it and places on the tomb a token of contempt or homage.

Song of the Occident, song of man drunk with faith in himself.
His song a beautiful winged hope, wings of another life.
when the sun will change its course: it will rise in the Occident.
But, oh, the universe will lose its head with joy.

Its gay tango rhythm will enmesh the skeins of the old god,
will scandalize his faithful children on another planet.
Song of the Occident, song of man drunk with faith in himself.
Let us listen to the song wrapped in puffs of steam, drops of
sweat!

The ideological drama implicit in « Wandering Souls » is resolved in « Song of the Occident ». We do not know the date of this poem, but it cannot be much later than the other [34]: the mark of « the marvelous Occident » appears in both, the meter is the same, the vocabulary almost the same. But progress has been made in the knowledge of the language [35], and the decadent elements are absent. « Song of

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[34] Luarasi does not give the date of the poem. If I remember correctly, the poem appeared in N. Çika's *Minerva* in 1935. That year the problem of the decadence of the Occident was a burning question. The April 1935 editorial of *Hylli i dritës*, « Dukë e Kênë » (Appearance or Reality »), contains the following passage: « When the god of the Occident is openly attacked in the press and his funeral rites are celebrated, we must examine the cause and ask ourselves: where are we going? » The cause is quickly identified: « Through indirect but fatal war against religion, beneath the mask of patriotism, the ground is prepared in Albania for communism and Freemasonry » (p. 184).

[35] The level of grammar in « Wandering Souls » is that of a beginner. Spelling mistakes abound: « shtret » for « shtërret », « thret » for « thërret », « acarr » for « acar », « vorresë » for « vorrezë », « mramë » for « mbramë », « fsham » for

the Occident » is a hymn to human work, creative and liberating. It is no longer a question here of « suffering with man », but of working and singing with him, for man has eliminated fatigue, abolished misery. His victory is celebrated as the triumph of « man drunk with faith in himself », i.e. of the new man who has dethroned the old god. The religion of gods has been supplanted (relegated to « another planet »), a new era has begun for humanity.

Is this change of tone in Migjeni's poetry purely subjective, or must it be, on the contrary, explained by external influences? It is not possible to define Migjeni's ideology during his Yugoslav period. We have from that period a notebook of comments in Serbo-Croatian and Russian, some of wich are socialistic in tone. Here is one of them: « In art, the laws and psychology of the class struggle are at work just as in the other areas of social consciousness ». More numerous are the passages which reflect his theological training. We

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« fshamë », « hijën » for « hijen » or « hien ». More serious are the morphological errors: « duejnë » for « donë » or « duen », « qiellen [...] të tymuem » for « qiellen [...] të tymueme » or « qiellin [...] të tymuem », « në cilën » for « në të cilën », « në nesërmen » for « të nesërmen », « ndjenjat et vet » for « ndjenjat e veta ». The syntax is not properly Albanian. The sentence « shkimet drita në pamundsín e vet » (lit. « the light consumes itself in its impossibility ») is a calque from foreign languages; the strange adverbial construction « adhurueshëm e me nji credo » (lit. « adorably and with a credo ») means something like « through adoration and prayer ». In the sentence « bâjnë të fala dhe met'hane vendeve të shuguruem », the poet arbitrarily eliminates the pleonastic pronoun « u » which should precede the verb; « vendeve të shuguruem » stands for « vendeve të shugurueme », an error arising from the attempt to make « shuguruem » rhyme with « tymuem » — the latter erroneus for « tymueme » (« qiellën [...] të tymuem »); « met'hane » is part of the Byzantine liturgical language: in Serbo-Croatian « metanija » « metanisanje » mean « reverence » « homage ». It is safe to assume that Migjeni wrote the poem in Serbo-Croatian and then translated it into Albanian. — Passing now to « Song of the Occident », we notice a slight improvement: the spelling mistakes are rare (« ka për t'u lind » for « ka për t'u lindë », « ngatron » for « ngatrron »), the morphological errors are less numerous (although there is a serious one, « planetë të tjetër » for « planetë tjetër » — the author does not yet know how to use the prepositional article). Besides several barbarisms, some of which are completely gratuitous (« solemne », « egzaltuem »), we find a neologism, « tymore ». The syntax is still lame. There is an anacoluthon due to an improper use of the verb: « dëgjon zanin q'i thotë feja » for « dëgjon zanin me të cilin i flet feja » or « dëgjon fjalën që i thotë feja ». There is also an interjection incorrectly used: « Por deh! nga lumnija tash humb kokën rruzullimi ». The interjection « deh! », restricted to the Scutari region, is constructed with the optative mood — Gjergj Fishta often uses it in invocations (« Deh, moj Zânë, të kjofsha true! ») in *The Highland Lute*. Migjeni has the interjection precede an indicative — the case is particularly significant and will be analyzed in due course.

quote one which seems to shed light on the ideological content of « Song of the Occident »: « Our duty is to work upon the soul of man, to defend the mystery against the miracle, to adore the incomprehensible, and also to reject the absurd, to accept of the inexplicable only that which is indispensable, to purify religion of superstition, to clean God of worms » [36]. It may well be that his apostasy, begun on the benches of the seminary, was completed under the influence of progressive literature. Social-humanitarian poetry, unknown in Albania, was fairly widespread in Yugoslavia between the two world wars [37]. The poetic climate of « Wandering Souls », written about a year after the poet's return to Albania, when his Albanian was imperfect, seems to derive from Serbo-Croatian social-humanitarian literature, where one finds side by side Nietzsche and Marx, Ecclesiastes and Schopenhauer, and where elements of socialist West-European literature are mingled with elements of Russian literature, from Pushkin to Gorky [38]. One might wonder, then, if « Song of the

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[36] I translate into English the text already translated into Albanian by Luarasi (*Vepra*, pp. 34-5).

[37] He must have felt, because of a certain affinity of poetic character, the influence of Miroslav Krleža. A complex poet and prose-writer with an aggressive, impetuous temperament, Krleža dominated Serbo-Croatian literature between the wars. Certain features of his style such as eloquence, sarcasm, epic tone are found in Migjeni, as well as some of his attitudes like anti-conformism, atheism, refusal of tradition. Another poet whom Migjeni must have read is Djuro Sudeta (1903-1927), the author of *Twilights*, a religious soul anguished by the mystery of death (he died of tuberculosis). Other sources might have been Antun B. Simić (1898-1925), whose social-humanitarian poetry has a marked urban character like that of Migjeni, and a Bulgarian poet who also died of tuberculosis, Hristo Smirnenski (1898-1923), author of *Winter Evenings*, which has something in common with « Songs of Misery ». A contemporary of Migjeni, whom he probably did not know, but who resembles him in many respects, is the Hungarian poet Attila Jozsef (1905-1937), a religious soul of proletarian origin.

[38] When I was writing my first essay on Migjeni, « Historija e dhímbshme e shpirtit të rí » (*Kritika* 1944), I noticed among the poet's books, which his sister Olga showed me, some of Dostoyevsky's novels, with notes in the margins. Something of Alyosha Karamazov and something of his brother Ivan can be found in the poetic persona of Migjeni. But his work carries no traces of Soviet poets, not even of Mayakovsky. If Migjeni had read this poet, it is unlikely that he would have missed the onset of « Very Good »: « Time / is an unusually lengthy / thing. / Once upon a time / but folk-poems passed by. / Neither legends, / nor epics, / nor epopees sing. / Stanzas now / like telegrams / fly ». (*Mayakovsky* transl. by H. Marshall Dobson, London, 1965, p. 364). Migjeni wrote in one of his representative poems: « Let a man be born, / let him build a new epoch, / let him create an epic, / let the new life be sung on our lutes ». The lute (« lahuta ») is a traditional musical instrument — Migjeni is

Occident » does not derive from the same social-humanitarian literature: Nietzsche and Marx appear there still in good company, judging from the reading of « The Forms of the Superman », which ends with the following stanzas:

> One sees the Superman in the legacy of the future,
> a conscience without ambiguity,
> a conscience without compromise,
> with a granite fist, unbreakable.
>
> Magnificent sphinx the Superman of the future,
> without heart, without feelings,
> his eyes of lightning
> rolling around the globe, his glance incensed.
>
> Times past on the brow of the Superhuman
> are traces of combat,
> marks of suffering:
> for new life is born with the death of man.

At a first glance it would seem that this « Nietzschean dithyramb » continues without a break the paean of the Occident, therefore the man celebrated in the latter is a superman. But one is immediately aware of a difference when one considers the temporal perspective in the two poems: that which is only hope in « The Forms of the Superman » becomes certitude in « Song of the Occident ». The shift is important and must be explained.

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thinking of Fishta's *The Highland Lute*, to which he opposes a new epic, with a completely different spirit, but an epic nonetheless. For Mayakovsky, on the other hand, the epic is an outdated literary form, which a revolutionary poet should not use. Mayakovsky knows that a new social structure requires its own form; the message and its form must both be new: Mayakovsky's verse will be a verse-telegram. Migjeni's style, on the other hand, continues to be epic because his conception of history remains essentially epic. According to such a conception, it is the heroes who make history. When Mayakovsky writes on Lenin, he stresses his non-heroic aspect, he does not want him idealized for fear that he will be falsified, he protests against those who make of him a prophet: « Surely / Lenin won't be mobbed: / « Leader by the Grace of God! » If he / had been / royal and divine, / I wouldn't / have spared myself / out of rage. / I'd have / pit myself / against that procession line, / cut across the crowd / and the funeral cortège ». (« Vladimir Ilyich Lenin » in *Mayakovsky*, p. 253). The comparison shows that the ideological differences reveal themselves in differences of poetic language. We shall see later on that Migjeni did not break completely with the ideology of the past whose categories he preserves. He denied, it is true, bourgeois values, but he could not go beyond them. Now to deny and to supersede are two distinct moments in a dialectic process.

When Migjeni began to write, the first Marxist groups had already been formed in Albania. The two most relevant ones were those in Korçë and in Scutari. In Korçë Marxism made headway mostly due to the workers who had contact with the Greek Marxist workers, some of whom were Trotskyites. The students were another factor. There was in Korçë, during the period between the wars, a French lycée, a good many of whose graduates went for their advanced studies to France. In that country, in 1935, the coalition of leftist parties had brought to power a socialist government. The Albanian students in France thus came to be exposed to a political climate favorable to the diffusion of Marxist ideas — some of these students became leaders of the Albanian Communist Party during World War II. In Scutari Marxism made progress thanks to the violent reaction of the Catholic clergy which, in seeking to extinguish the flame, succeeded in fanning it [39]. Scutarene Marxism was principally the work of intellectuals, teachers and students dominated the group [40]. The workers were relatively few in that city of artisans and craftsmen whose industry consisted mostly of some cigarette factories. Some of the most active Communist workers belonged to the Orthodox part of the population, a minority with respect to the Moslem-Catholic majority. Migjeni came into contact with these workers by reason of his belonging to the same minority group [41].

The influence of this handful of radical workers could explain, in the last analysis, why Migjeni's poetry has revolutionary charge, differing in this respect from the poetry of other progressive writers of the time who did not cross the threshold of social-humanitarian

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[39] Scutari, capital of a Turkish « vilajet » (province) and a center of Islamic culture in Albania, was also the citadel of Albanian Catholicism and the hearth of Roman Catholic culture in Albania (the Jesuits and the Franciscans had schools in Scutari since the end of the 19th century). The city was also an important commercial center, connected principally with Venice and Trieste, and had through them access to European civilization.

[40] The leader of the group, Zef Mala, was a student of philosophy. The group consisted for the most of high school students — among whom were Qemal Stafa and Vojo Kushi, both national heroes, killed by the fascist regime — as well as some teachers. Among them we should mention Skënder Luarasi, my professor at the Scutari Gymnasium in 1935-36 — he then joined the International Brigades in Spain. Migjeni had asked Luarasi to intervene with an editor in order to get his volume published (See letter of 12 January 1936, *Vepra*, p. 215).

[41] To the Orthodox community belonged Branko Kadia and Jordan Misja, two other communist heroes, also victims of fascism. The Orthodox community of Scutari consisted of a few families, all belonging to the same social level (the richest owned a tavern or a bakery), which explains the solidarity of the members of the community.

literature. But thoroughly revolutionary his poetry could not be for various reasons: he loved the Occident too much, and tuberculosis debilitated his fiber. His ecclesiastical training was not a stimulant for militancy either. In « Song of the Occident » the illness is silent, but the role of religion is manifest in the very language structuring the whole poem: « god », « soul », « cult », « temple », « high mass », « apotheosis ». The socialist message is couched in liturgical language: factories substitute for churches, smoke for incense, the « gay tango » for the *missa solemnis*. But the negation of the « old » religion is not a negation of all religion, and because it is materialistic and « bare », the new « cult » is no less a cult: « the apotheosis of iron » « intoxicates », « exalts », makes one « lose one's head », provokes « delirium »; the « souls » of the workers « filter out of the smoke stacks » very much like the souls of Christians in the flames of Purgatory.

The cult which the poet praises is, basically, atheistic humanism put to the service of socialism. In supplanting the asceticism of the Middle Ages, humanism had shifted the stress from the divine to the human by exalting man's inventive and constructive capacities. The result was the art of the Renaissance and the science of Galilei. The inventor of the telescope had opened for the human eyes the gates of the skies (« tears the white horizons »), thus powerfully contributing to dissipate superstition (« lays nature bare », « the enigma no longer gnaws at his brain »). But Galilei had also founded a new science, mechanics, which would soon make man the conqueror of the earth, and not only of its surface, its continents and oceans, but of its fiery core and its atmosphere (the drill that « pierces the earth », the airplane that « wounds the sky »). Through the technique created by him, man transforms not only the nature of things, but human nature itself. The industrial revolution, the result of the triumph of mechanics, produces in its turn the social class destined to revolutionize the world, the proletariat. According to Marx, the dialectic of history is such that the structure of bourgeois society will necessarily collapse under the pressure of the organized proletariat. In the new society, the proletariat ceases to be such, it becomes emancipated and educated. The possession by the workers of the means of production, proceeding on a par with the possession of technique, marks a new era, creates another mode of existence (« another life ») which changes the face of our planet, reverses the direction of history (« the sun will change its course »). The reversal consists in the fact that work, the engine of history, no longer exploited, no longer causes fatigue and suffering, but becomes a source of creativity and joy. In an address to English workers, Marx states: « We know that the new forces of society, in order to display themselves fully, need only

new men to control them, and these men are the workers [...]. In the signs that confound the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy and the poor harbingers of regress, we recognize our alert friend Robin Goodfellow, the old mole that knows well how to dig underground, the excellent miner: the revolution »[42].

A reading of the poem with an eye to its proletarian ciphers reveals the face of Marx under the mask of Nietzsche. In « The Forms of the Superman » we came across the line, « new life is born with the death of man », while in « To and from on the Swing of Fate » the corresponding expression is « resurrection out of the old decay ». In the poem under examination, « Occident » signifies « decline », « downfall ». One would say in Albanian, playing on the double sense of the word: *prendim i prendimit*, meaning that Western civilization is a moribund civilization. « Song of the Occident » is thus its funeral hymn[43]. The line in the poem, « the sun will rise in the Occident », is another way of saying that « new life is born with the death of man ». To two lines mean the same thing: the proletariat will bury the bourgeoisie.

Does the condemnation of the West imply a position in favor of the East, of the Soviet Union, to be more precise? In other words, is the condemnation of the West political as well as ideological? We should remember that the cultural geography of the time excluded the Soviet Union from Western Europe. The Soviet Union itself took pains to set itself apart from the West, politically as well as geographically. Here is what Lenin wrote in one of his last adresses, « Better Fewer, but Better »: « In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc. account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe [...]. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East. between the most civilized countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the majority, this majority must become civilized »[44]. What Lenin wrote in 1923

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[42] *The People's Paper*, 19 April 1856, in K. Marx & F. Engels: *Werke*, vol. XII, p. 4 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1961).

[43] The theme of the twilight of the gods, common to many writers of the period, is dealt with in the sketch « Decapitated Idols ». There is a poem by D. Shuteriqi, « Götterdämmerung » (*Songs of Youth*, 1933) which contains the following lines: « New souls rescued [...] sing the hymn of the new life, / having broken the chains of soul and body ».

[44] *Pravda*, 2 March 1923, in Lenin: *Collected Works*, vol. XXXIII, p. 500-1 (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966).

about the West was still valid when Migjeni composed his «Song of the Occident». But the poet is much more indulgent, because of his non-militancy, towards the West, which he at once loves and hates, according to whether he considers its cultural superiority, or its imperialism. Moreover, the text of the poem contains nothing to the effect that the East is associated with the idea of revolution. These considerations would lead to the conclusion that Migjeni's Marxism is of the western type [45], were it not for the fact that, at the time during which he was writing, revolution was more the war-horse of Nazism that of European Marxism.

One thing is certain, the poem has Marxist inspiration. First and foremost, because the emphasis is not on the individual, but on the working class and the society of the future which the former is expected to build. We have come across the plural instead of the singular in « Wandering Souls », but there the plural is a simple synecdoche, an expedient way of disguising subjectivity. Whereas here the « we » is literally true and in the fullest sense. We could discount as not necessarily Marxian the atheistic humanism permeating the poem, though orthodox Marxism is indeed atheistic — Marx calls religion « the opium of the people ». According to Marx, humanity realizes itself in the products of its work, and the history of civilization is the history of the modes of production and the ownership relations which follow from them. In keeping with this idea, Migjeni shows the new men at work, amidst the machines they have built; the poem is a symphony of human voices and mechanical noises. The language of the last line illustrates the materialistic conception of history: « Let us listen to the song wrapped in puffs of steam, drops of sweat »! The line establishes an organic relationship between art (the song of the poet), human work (the « sweat » of the workers), and the natural energy needed for its transformation into work (« steam »). Such a conception of art does away with the traditional dichotomy,

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[45] If the social-democratic ideology had any influence on Migjeni during his stay in Yugoslavia, such an influence during his Albanian period must, most likely, be ruled out: Albanian social-democracy did not exist at that time. But there were people whose liberal or leftist ideas could well have worked upon the poet. I thing in the first place of Gjergj Kokoshi, Migjeni's closest relative on his mother's side. Kokoshi, who studied in Turin and taught Latin and art history at the Lyceums of Scutari and Tirana, joined the partisans during the resistance, and was Minister of Education in the first revolutionary government. Immediately after the liberation, he resigned his post to go over to the opposition as a social-democrat. Migjeni had asked Kokoshi — I learned from Kokoshi (a fellow prisoner in the Burrel jail) to correct the manuscript of *Free verse.*

characteristic of class culture, between art and work [46]; art is removed from the sphere of pure spirit, in which spiritualism ordinarily places it, and is brought back into the materiality of history where the expression is no longer divorced from the thing expressed and the word retains its original relationship to the thing it signifies. The line attests to the genius of Migjeni who, by metaphoric language, reasserts the continuity between spirit and matter that Western civilization broke a long time ago.

5. *The Strange Grammar of « Song of the Occident ».*

We have shown that the transition from one poem to the other in « Songs of the Occident » implies an ideological evolution in the sense of a more coherent Marxism. We shall now see if this process is somehow reflected in the poetic language. To this end we shall consider the use of the tense and mood in the text. In the first three stanzas, the verb is in the present indicative, the tense of historical actuality. In the fourth stanza we pass to the future, the tense of expectation and hope (« beautiful winged hope »). The use of the future continues in the last stanza which ends, however, with the present again: « let us listen to the song ». The circular movement from the present to the future and then from the future to the present produces an effect of temporal perspective in which the future is actualized. Now the future-present is characteristic of the scientific prevision in which knowledge and belief are one and the same. And it is well known that Marxism wants to be a science and not an ideology, distinct in this respect from « utopian » socialism.

A closer look at the conjugation of the verb holds a few surprises for us. Will the triumph of socialism, inevitable according to Marxist dialectics, necessarily make humanity happy? The doubt in

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[46] « Song of the Occident » could illustrate the aesthetic ideas of Trotsky, set forth in a well-known article, « Revolutionary Art and Socialist Art ». For the Marxist theoretician, art and socialist literature must agree with technological progress. The collaboration between art and technology is destined to intensify in the future: art will be especially operative in the production of material goods, providing them with formal qualities: ornamentation as a gratuitous addition will disappear, art and production will no longer be separated, and nature will become more artistic, corrected by technology. The principles of this transformation of art and literature are, according to Trotsky: class hatred which feeds the revolutionary spirit, class solidarity which eliminates egotism, prevalence of collective over individual feeling, atheism, and a sense of reality.

the poet's mind betrays itself in a curious slip. The interjection « deh »! in « por deh! nga lumnija tash humb kokën rruzullimi » « but, oh, the universe will lose its head with joy » is regularly used with the verb in the optative, for which Albanian has a special mood. In Migjeni's line, the interjection is followed by a sentence with the verb in the future of the indicative. We notice that the future in this case is not the normal Gheg future, but the idiomatic Scutarene future, composed of the adverb « tash » « now » and the verb in the present of the indicative. The adverbial phrase « tash humb » translates literally as « loses now » meaning « is going to be lost, will be lost ». The use of such an idiomatic future, which results morphologically an emphatic present, is perfectly in line with the poet's temporal perspective in which future and present are synthesized in the time of certain prevision. Now the poet places himself in this temporal perspective very naturally, as if by instinct, and not intentionally, as one might be tempted to believe. Indeed, while the idiomatic Scutarene future is repeated in the form « tash i a ngatron » « will enmesh », the normal Gheg form appears immediately afterwards: « ka me i a skandalizue » « will scandalize ». There is another case of the normal future in the text, « do ndrojë », which is the normal Tosk future form: the auxiliary « do » followed by the subjunctive. On the other hand, « ka me i a skandalizue », the Gheg form, is composed of the auxiliary « ka » « has » followed by the infinitive. This wavering between three different forms of the future in the space of two stanzas is proof that Migjeni moves quite freely — licentiously, one should say — without feeling constrained by the fixity of grammatical forms. Thus, he uses the Tosk future, « do ndrojë » « will change », because this form renders well his desire to change the course of history; and he uses the idiomatic Scutarene future, morphologically an emphatic present, because this form empasizes his impatience to see his desire come true: the revolution is expected to happen « now », without delay. Why such haste? The haste betrays the doubt inherent in his mind, the uncertainty of hope. We have seen, in reading « To and from on the Swing of Fate », that « His Majesty King Doubt » « creeps treacherously » into the poet's mind in certain occasions. It is the shadow of a similar doubt which encroaches upon hope at this moment. And what if the triumph of socialism were an illusion after all? What certainty is there that the promised happiness is not another paradisiacal dream? The indicative mood of the verb after an interjection governing the optative betrays the frailty of his hope, while the adversative « but » preceding the optative interjection reveals a congenital ambivalence of feelings: the socialist revolution will change the course of history when it happens, to the jubilation of all man-

kind; « but » will it happen at all? The strange grammar of the line under examination is one of those rare instances in which a slip delivers the secret of composition rising from the subconscious.

The doubt which makes the poet commit the slip does not restrict itself to this syntagm, but makes its way, tortuously, through the many hyperboles in the text: « mad religion of the marvelous Occident », « man walks exalted in an inconceivable delirium » « the universe will lose its head with joy ». The expression « mad religion », which brings to mind St. Paul's « holy madness » [47] rather than Plato's « divine frenzy », refers, no matter how interpreted, to an irrational state of mind which is alien to scientific Marxism. Again, technology, we are told, eliminates superstition (« the enigma » which « gnaws at the brain » of man). But technical civilization can also result in the alteration of nature, despoiling the latter of its freshness and beauty. What if the smoke of factories were really to « dull the brightness of the sun », making the air unbreathable? The bourgeois civilization destined to perish will appear one day before the tribunal of history; the judgement will be one of « contempt or homage ». The disjunctive phrase, while betraying the presence of Nietzsche (for it was the philosopher of the Superman who talked of the « great disgust » for an « all too human » civilization) is further proof of the divided mind of the poet in his love-hate relationship with the West. The revolutionary wine cannot numb the worm that gnaws at the brain of this son of the sky, hurled « into the mire of our days » [48], but determined to walk, like a modern Christ, « embracing the men whom the night embraces » [49].

« Song of Occident » is a paean using notes of a funeral march, an « allegro ma non troppo » a « gay tango » (« tango qejfi ») in the poet's own words. The ambivalence is built into the language, an indication of the poet's ideological drama, « hawk » or « dove », according to the circumstances [50]. Shortly before Migjeni, another socialist poet, another « wandering soul », Sergei Yessenin, had lived his « tragic love » for the Occident. Yessenin killed himself after returning home; Migjeni went to die in a western city, after having dreamed of living there. The drama of his life is to some extent the drama of the Albanian nation. Caught between two opposed cultural

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[47] *Corinthians* I, 1, 18, 25, 27. Migjeni who had studied theology must have been familiar with these well-known passages.

[48] « Unhappy Inspiration ».

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] « The Weight of Destiny ».

tendencies for more than two thousand years, this nation has a double face, which is somehow reflected in the very structure of the Albanian language, whose phonetics shows more affinities with the languages of the Oriental Indo-European branch (the *satem* group), while its vocabulary is largely of Latin-Romance origin [51]. The phenomenon has been briefly discussed in the introduction of this essay, and we might add, by way of conclusion, that the history of Albania after World War II is the history of its swinging back to the East, the stages of this return being marked by alliances with, first, Yugoslavia, then the Soviet Union, and finally China.

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[51] Of 5420 basic words in Gustav Meyer's dictionary (*Etymologisches Wörterbuch der albanesischen Sprache*, 1891), no fewer than 1420 (about 27 %) are of Latin-Romance origin, while the words of Slavic and Modern Greek derivation are considerably less numerous (540 and 840 respectively). According to Eqrem Çabej (*Hyrje në historinë e gjuhës shqipe*, Prishtinë, 1970, p. 76) these statistics are somewhat exaggerated.

IV.

THE PEASANT IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

1. *Literature versus Politics and the Politics of Literature.*

Albanian literature is a most pertinent expression of Albanian nationalism. The latter, which hardly existed before the League of Prizren (1878-81), culminated in the country's independence in 1912. Albania's occupation by Italy in 1939 gave rise to a movement of national liberation which was vigorously supported by the Communist Party. Nationalism which brought communism to power in 1944 has continued to be the propelling forse ever since. This was due to the need for self-defense when Albania found herself isolated, after breaking first with Yugoslavia (1948), and then with the Soviet Union (1961). The subsequent alliance with China has not removed the country's political isolation. And one understands why the nationalist tradition in literature which began about a century ago is still lingering today.

The reader curious to follow the meanders of contemporary Albanian politics leading to the alliance between the Gulliver of the nations and a pygmy three-hundredths his size is referred to the pertinent footnote [1]. The fabulous nature of Albanian politics will be to him less

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[1] The farce of an Albanian constitutional monarch ruling Sultan-like over a country of peasants and shepherds came to an end when Mussolini's troops invaded it. The king left in a hurry together with a handful of faithful officers, while the rest of his governmental apparatus switched to fascism in the twinkling of an eye, acclaiming Mussolini as a liberator. Practically the same Parliament that had crowned Zog as king in 1928 now offered the royal crown to Vittorio Emanuele III. The population felt outraged and nationalism flaired up, laying the ground for the resistance. It was at the outset, very much in Albanian style, the work of rebellious peasants led by outlaws. The most famous of them, Myslim Peza, a peasant in hiding from the homonymous village near Tirana, formed a *çetë* « band » which operated in the vicinity of the capital. Soon various antifascist students and workers joined his band, giving it a political nature. The defeat of the Italian army in the Italo-Greek war (1940-41) gave incentive to the armed bands which soon developed guerrilla tactics. The Pezë Conference (16 Nov. 1942), which was organized by Enver Hoxha, Secretary of the Communist Party, worked out the alliance of the latter and the Peza-led peasants with an indipendent guerrilla group led by Abaz Kupi. A former haiduk, the hero of an epic folksong, and subsequently an officer in the king's army, Kupi organized the resistance in his native region Krujë, and eventually founded, when his

of a puzzle if he recalls that the most representative Albanian author has, in his epic, a historical character uproot an oak-tree to prove his strength. An anecdote could be added. To a foreigner once asking

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alliance with Hoxha fell apart, the royalist Party *Legaliteti*. The collapse of fascism (July 1943) found the resistance movement divided into three parties: the Movement of National Liberation (MNL) dominated by the Communist Party; the monarchist Party *Legaliteti*; and the National Front (*Balli Kombëtar*), a loose coalition of sundry anti-monarchic and anti-communist groups. The last two parties disgraced themselves either by collaborating with the Nazi army of occupation, or by not opposing it, whereas MNL fought consistently on the side of the allies. The ambiguous stance of the who nationalist parties spelled out their doom, thus making possible the victory of MNL. After the liberation, the Communist Party came into the open, establishing its dictatorship. During the period 1944-48, Albania was to all effects a satellite of Yugoslavia, and carried out, at the bidding of the Yugoslav Communist Party, a policy involving the liquidation of Albania as an independent state and its incorporation into the Yugoslav Federation as a seventh republic. The Yugoslav phase witnessed the meteoric rise of Koçi Xoxe, chief agent of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Originally a plumber with little or no education, the « proletarian » Xoxe succeeded in accumulating the offices of Organizational Secretary of the Party, Minister of Interior and Chief of Security, thus totally eclipsing the « professorial » Hoxha, the Party's Secretary General, whose fate seemed already decreed. All of a sudden, Yugoslavia broke with the Soviet Union and Hoxha seized his chance. He together with Mehmet Shehu, whom Xoxe had already purged, arrested the latter, then had him tried and finally executed as « traitor to the country and the Party ». At the same time the new leadership denounced Yugoslavia's treacherous policy towards Albania and the Soviet Union alike. Albania aligned itself decidedly with the latter and became the vociferous mouthpiece of Stalinist propaganda against « revisionist » Titoism. This won for it the sympathy of Stalin who took the orphan under his wing. Stalin was indeed generous with Albania, he gave it monetary and technical aid, but above all a sense of security by personally guaranteeing its independance at a time when plans were being made for Albania's partition among its neighbors. Unfortunately for the Hoxha-Shehu clique, Stalin died shortly afterwards, and Albania's sky darkened again. Krushchev, who started the process of destalinization, had little patience with the Albanian leadership who defiantly refused to desecrate their savior and idol. And when they realized that Krushchev had thoughts of selling them out to Tito in order to win him back to the communist bloc, they angrily reacted by breaking diplomatic relationships with the Soviet Union (1961). The latter was accused, just as Yugoslavia previously, for having deviated from the right path of Marxist-Leninism and taken the road of revisionism. And since all other members of the Warsaw Pact, to which Albania had been admitted in 1955, stood by the Soviet Union, thus adopting the policy of destalinization, Albania was left alone to defend the purity of Marxism-Leninism, sharing that honor with the other truly revolutionary country in the globe, China. The thrust of the split catapulted Albania to the latter's side, an alliance was worked out between the two countries, and Albania became, in exchange for economic and technical aid, China's mouthpiece at the United Nations at a time when China was being denied membership in the latter.

how many people lived in his country, an Albanian gave this answer: « We are two hundred and two million together with the Soviet Union ». We have already pointed out that much of the heroism in Albanian literary tradition originates with a dearth that is, in the last analysis, of economic nature. The inflation and redundancy characterizing Albanian socialist realism obeys the same psychological law of sublimative compensation. Socialist realism is, with respect to traditional realism, disadvantaged in giving a truthful picture of reality inasmuch as the former is an ideology involving ideals of fulfillment and plenteousness, whereas the latter can abide by the matter-of-fact situation of privation and alienation which is most apparent in capitalist societies. Imagine now a literature such as Albanian socialist realism at grips with an economic situation in which elemental needs are satisfied, but abundance remains a dream: words will naturally tend to make up for the wished-for reality, the more so if their production and consumption is officially prescribed. Migjeni has written an anti-militarist prose poem, « Harvest », in which peasants are shown facing guns instead of corn ears in their fields. To their protest that they sowed seeds, not bullets, the official answer is: « You must now learn how to eat iron »! The motto fits, with appropriate substitutions, any society where a person is made a passive recipient of ideological propaganda, and literature becomes a tool of persuasion or terror, according to the gravity of the case. We shall here briefly describe the phenomenon for the contemporary period.

Already before the proclamation of monarchy (1928), influential political and religious circles came to a tacit agreement for the partition of the literary heritage in accordance with the partition of political power [2]. Each of these groups advertised its own representative authors. Their judgments were conveyed orally through teaching, public addresses and cafe conversations rather than in writing (usually newspaper articles) [3]. The images of a few writers combining poetry with patriotism and religion were fixed in textbooks of which the state had almost total control. The Albanian Parnassus was divided between the Bektashi Naim and Father Fishta, each occupying one of its summits and standing respectively for the Tosk Moslem, and the Gheg Catholic, public opinion. But the third obvious candidate

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[2] After the end of World War I Albania was ruled by a quadrumvirate of four regents, one of whom was Sunni (Avdi Bey Toptani), another Bektashi (Aqif Pasha Elbasani), a third Catholic (Monsignor Bumçi), and a fourth Orthodox (Dr. Turtulli).

[3] See my « For a Critical Appraisal of Albanian Literature » in *Përpjekja e Jonë* 1 (1970).

for the denominational literary triumvirate, Bishop Noli, was vetoed by the regime because of his Soviet sympathies [4]. The vacancy was filled during the Italian occupation by De Rada who, as son of an Italo-Albanian Byzantine priest and a profoundly religious soul himself [5], fitted the role well. De Rada's chief sponsor, E. Koliqi, rose to the fourth place in the row [6]. Communist fury ravaged this literary sanctuary, beheading most of the idols and removing others permanently to the storage room. The literary purge struck three major authors: Schirò, Konitza, and Fishta [7], as well as a number of older and younger authors who had either put their talents to the service of anti-popular regimes (Zogism and fascism), or had been exponents of anti-communist parties during the occupation period [8]. Soon, however, the anti-intellectual wave reached independents and sympathizers alike, who disaproved of such literary vandalism [9], and it went on

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[4] The Albanian government headed by Noli was one of the first in Europe to recognize the Soviet Union, and Noli maintained a sympathetic attitude towards communism for the rest of his life.

[5] We have already shown in our essay that Bishop Filja looms in *Skanderbegu* larger than the national hero himself. Another significant example is the apparition, at the end of *Serafina* B, of Bishop Guma (Guma Radi is an ancestor of the poet—see note I, 189). The bishop raises the Epirote red flag, attached to the cross, over the altar (« ahier ljidhurë vantiljen / të kuqe e vëi përsipër / kriqin ai zott e ngrënej / mbaaljë autarin »), an angel at his side; then he pronounces a sermon invoking liberation (« ljefterii ») from both Turkish slavery and the slavery of sin. The episode represents the Byzantine *ecclesia triumphans.*

[6] Until very recently he held the chair of Albanian at the University of Rome. That title as well as his publication of *Shêjzat,* the only relevant magazine of the Albanian diaspora, has added to his literary fame, somehow counter-balancing his political notoriousness.

[7] G. Schirò, the chief Siculo-Albanian writer, cherished the idea of a union of Italy and Albania in the person of a Savoia monarch, and in his last years became an advocate of fascism. F. Konitza, the recognized master of Tosk prose, was Zog's Minister Plenipotentiary in Washington. Fishta was the official national poet and represented the government in various international conferences. He did not object to Albania's occupation by Italy and was made a member of the Accademia d'Italia.

[8] Kristo Kloqi, a high magistrate, was a panegyrist of Zog. Midhat Frashëri (Lumo Skendo) was the founder and leader of the National Front. Etëhem Haxhiademi, the only playwright of some value, and Musine Kolokari, the only woman writer of the time, were exponents of the National Front.

[9] An account of the situation is my article « Komunizmi dhe shkrimtarët shqiptarë » (Communism and the Albanian Writers) in *Shqiptari i lirë* (1959) 2 and 3, listing the names of those who lost their lives, or underwent imprisonment and forced labor.

inexorably dragging in Party members accused of deviationism, revisionism, and other Party crimes [10].

Not only anthologies and manuals for scholastic use, but also a supposedly scholarly work such as the *History of Albanian literature* (1959), which can be considered the summa of Albanian literary scholarship, hardly mention such authors as Schirò and Konitza, Fishta and Malëshova [11]. The ostracism of writers whose political views or practices disagree with the tenets of Albanian communism has its counterpart in the uncritical attitude towards the rest of Albanian literature validated by communist scholarship [12]. That attitude is rigidly and narrowly nationalistic, of the dubious kind of nationalism

[10] The big name is Sejfullah Malëshova, the official communist poet, Minister of Education and Culture, and the recognized Party ideologist (he was a Komintern official) at a time when Marxist theory was infant in Albania. Accused of rightist deviationism, Malëshova was expelled from the Politburo and the Party, then confined to an area where he ended his life in total oblivion. Another major ideologist, Fadil Paçrami, a long time member of the Politburo and chief editor of the Party daily *Zëri i popullit* (The People's Voice), and who emerged as a playwright in recent times, was publicly accused as an « enemy of the Party and the people » after the last cultural purge in 1973 (See Peter Prifti, « The Albanian Party of Labor and the Intelligentsia » in *East European Quarterly* 3 (1974), p. 329).

[11] K. Bihiku, a leading critic, does not even mention Schirò, Konitza, Fishta and Malëshova, in « Les courants idéologiques et artistiques et les genres de littérature albanaise de la fin du XVIII siècle à nos jours » in *SAlb.* (1967) 1.

[12] The criticism on De Rada has not moved an inch from the positions where M. Marchianò and V. Gualtieri left it — P. Tamburi points out that « the whole chapter on De Rada [in *History of Albanian Literature*] is nothing else but the literary translation of some more important passages from Marchianò's work » (*Shêjzat* 7-8-9-10 (1965), p. 347) — despite the manifest interest in, and sympathy for, the Arbëresh poet, who is, however, still viewed as a national figure rather than an original poet. Naim Frashëri, a mediocre writer, continues to occupy the throne where Tosk Moslem nationalism installed him. Luigj Gurakuqi, a distinguished educator and patriot rather than a writer — he was Minister of Treasure in the 1924 democratic government and was murdered in exile by a monarchist sleuth — has received recognition as a poet. Not so Vinçenc Prennushi, the highest ranking Albanian Catholic dignitary who died in prison (1948), a poet who had the reputation of being second only to Fishta in some literary circles. The void created by the literary ostracism has been somehow narrowed down by promoting to the front rows second-rate writers. Chapters XXI and XXII in the second volume of the *History of Albanian Literature*, dealing with the period of the national awakening, are dedicated to Hilë Mosi and Risto Siliqi, and Mihal Grameno respectively. But Ndoc Nikaj, « the major author of our narrative until the middle of the twenties and the most prolific novelist of Albanian literature before World War II » (II, p. 552) has only this much said about him (he also was in prison). Ad even Fan Noli, who was friendly to Albanian communism and had socialist ideas himself (but he lived in the United States where he headed the Albanian-American Orthodox Church), is only men-

fathered by Stalin. Of course the word « nationalism » is carefully avoided, and terms such as « popularity » and « progressiveness » are employed to name the accepted part of Albanian literature. But names do not change the essence of things, and the fact remains that literary scholarship in Albania continues to lag behing as a consequence of its persistent contempt for the formal criteria presiding over literary judgements: lexical variety, phonetic richness, metrical complexity, syntactic originality, figurative language, stylistic resourcefulness, composition techniques. Instead, the merit of the literary work is determined by the presence, or absence, of such properties as patriotism, democratic spirit and devotion to the people. Such non-literary qualities must be given careful consideration in arriving at literary judgments, but only insofar as they are found to be operative in the practice of writing itself, shaped into linguistic and stylistic traits identifying the script. Literature is the art of the written word existing by virtue of formal properties of grammar and rhythm concerning a subjective organization of language as found in society and learned in it.

The kind of literature labelled socialist realism in Albania can be more adequately described as socialist neo-romanticism. While thoroughly socialistic in content, upholding the radical changes carried out by the Party in the socio-economic field, that literature presents striking similarity with the romantic literature of the national awakening period. The resemblance translates a conscious effort to establish continuity between the national movement of the pre-independence period and the communist revolution; the Party which organized and directed the Movement of National Liberation against the fascist-nazi occupation as well as the « anti-popular » parties and groups during the occupation is seen as the natural heir of the centuries-long popular and patriotic movement starting with the League of Lesh (Alessio) in 1444 and concluding with the battle for Tirana in 1944. Two border-line towering figures delimit this five-century period of Albanian history: Scanderbeg and Enver [13]. The effort of Alba-

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tioned here and there, although he belongs to the same historical period as Mosi and Grameno, an author by far more important than they.

[13] See n. 20 — we quote from L. Kokona, « Scanderbeg dans la littérature albanaise contemporaine » in *SAlb.* (1967) 2, pp. 195-56, in which the author comments on poems by three representative writers, Siliqi, Xoxa, and Kadare: « Les littérateurs brossent le preux Scanderbeg, dans plusieurs de leur créations, comme une figure aux dimensions des héros de l'épique légendaire. C'est le cas de la poésie 'Preux parmi les preux' (1953) de L. Siliqi, où à travers les paroles de l'aède, Georges Kastriote est doué d'une puissance surnaturelle [just as the hero in *The Highland Lute* VIII — see my comment p. 116]. Le poète fait recours

nian communism to set itself in the national tradition is quite understandable in view of the total isolation of the country. Its obvious vulnerability made it imperative for the leadership to strive for a monolithic national cohesion which only fervent nationalism can secure. Consequently, literature and the arts as well as all social sciences have been cultivated with the more or less tacit agreement to build up a national culture intended to cement the new socialist structure. This trend has been especially intense since the « cultural revolution » (1966-69) following the Chinese model. Thus old national glories have been refurbished [14], new ones discovered [15], traditional virtues extolled [16], and Albanian autochthony strongly asserted [17]. Scanderbeg is

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abondamment aux hyperboles pour faire ressortir la puissance extraordinaire de Scanderbeg, dont l'epée 'tranche en deux les montagnes'. J. Xoxa dans sa poésie 'La marche héroique' (1953), évoque la marche de trois cents partisans vers le Nord, et il fait noter comment, durant la lutte, tout recoin du pays a été inondé par la 'gloire scanderbéguienne'. L'exemple du héros incite les partisans de passer à l'attaque. Xoxa déclare que les aspirations séculaires du 'bas peuple' sont réalisées par 'les preux d'Enver', par 'les fils du Parti', qui marchent sur les traces de Scanderbeg. Face à l'abnégation partisane, qui réprésente un développement ultérieur des traditions héroïques du peuple albanais, plie la tête aussi notre héros national, dans la balade 'Scanderbeg' (1957) d'I. Kadare. Le preux s'ôte son heaume devant les nouvelles sépultures des héros partisans, qui ont mérité la place à côté des martyrs du passé. Dans cette balade, Scanderbeg est brossé par les traits des héros légendaires, l'épée dégaînée, monté sur le coursier qui court 'furieusement toute la nuit', sous la pluie et la tempête ».

[14] The patriotic works of Catholic humanists and scholars such as Marinus Barletius and Franciscus Blancus have been translated and circulated. The great feudal lords who rebelled against Turkey, the Bushatlis in the North and Ali Pasha in the South, are seen as forerunners of Albanian independence. In *Pashallëku i Shkodrës nën sundimin e Bushatllive* (The Scutari Pashalik under the Bushatlis, 1964), the author, S. N. Naçi, describes the battles of the Scutarene princes against Turkey as « the continuation of our people's liberation struggle against the centuries-long Turkish domination » (p. 248). Gone are the days when a proletarian (but pro-Turkish) leader such as Haxhi Qamili used to be celebrated as a national hero, side by side with Scanderbeg and Ismail Qemali.

[15] Among them, a 15th century religious painter from Elbasan, Onouphros (Onufri) (see Th. Popa, « Conclusions générales sur la peinture post-byzantine en Albanie » in *SAlb.* (1967) 1; a medieval Byzantine composer of liturgic music, Koukouzeles (Jan Kukuzeli) from Durrës (see R. Sokoli, *Figura të ndritura* (1965); another 15th century painter from Durrës, Andrea Alessi (*ibid.*).

[16] Siliqi's praise of the stoicism and hospitality of Northern mountaineers in *Resurrection* (see excerpt p. 182) is an example. Another is Kadare's sympathetic portrayal of the vendetta episode in *The General of the Dead Army* (see my account on p. 184). Still another is Xoxa's tale of heroism in which a blinded young Kosovar rises from his coffin to sing his death song (in *The Dead River* — see my comment on p. 111). Cf. the episode in *Bardha de Témal* — my comment on p. 180 — with the episode in *The Dead River.*

[17] All social sciences, linguistics history archeology ethnography anthropo-

more than ever the symbol of the nation [18]; epic poetry is again a favorite genre and narrative takes after the epic; prosody prefers folk meters, the taste for folklore informs literature. Viewed as propedeutic to, and integral part of, the latter rather than a social science [19], folklore is called upon to mediate between the validated literature of the past and socialist realism through their common folkloric basis, despite their strident ideological differences [20].

We here treat together socialist realism and Albanian literature in Yugoslavia, while setting apart Albanian literature in exile. The literary language in Albania today is Tosk, which has also been adopted by most of the Albanian writers in Yugoslavia, where a literature

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logy, are engaged in this direction. — For linguistics and history, see my note 94, p. 53. Nicholas G. L. Hammond (*Epirus*, 1967) interprets the recent findings in Vajzë (Valona) in the sense of a cultural continuity linking Epirus and Greece, a theory which destroys the thesis of an Illyrian-Albanian continuity maintained by Albanian archeologists (« Indeed, in view of the evidence from Vajzë [...] the area comprised by Central Albania and North Epirus is more likely than any other area to have been the homeland of the warriors who established themselves as kings of Mycenae late in the Middle Bronze Age... » p. 345). — For a critical approach to the problem of autochthony, see Stadtmüller's Introduction to *Forschungen*, pp. XIII-XXX.

[18] The fifth centenary of Scanderbeg's death was proclaimed a jubilee year. Writers, artists and scientists vied with each other to add luster to Scanderbeg's glory. Poets wrote poems and epics, narrators short stories and novels, critics essays (the article mentioned in note 13 gives a list of 62 items). Philologists edited manuscripts, reedited works on the national hero, translating several others; folklorists collected new material; historians researched existing or newly discovered sources; archeologists undertook fresh excavations. A musician composed an opera; film makers made movies; painters painted portraits; sculptors raised statues and monuments (in Tirana and Lesh). Various folkloric festivals and a national exhibition of figurative arts took place; a museum was inaugurated in Krujë. The scholarly reviews (*Studia albanica, Studime historike, Studime filologjike*) came out with special issues. The nation-wide cultural mobilization reached its climax with the Second Conference of Albanian Studies (Tirana, 12-18 January 1968), which was almost exclusively devoted to the commemoration of the national hero. Many papers were read in the sections of literature, folklore, history and linguistics (forty only in the latter), with the participation of foreign scholars invited by the government.

[19] Part One of the first volume of *History of Albanian Literature*, « Albanian Folklore and Early Albanian Literature », is entirely devoted to folklore (pp. 1-147).

[20] *Tregime dhe këngë popullore për Skënderbeun* (Tales and Folk Songs about Scanderbeg), an arrangement of published material with the addition of new one, and *Këngë popullore të Luftës NÇL dhe të periudhës së ndërtimit socialist* (Folk Songs on the War of National Liberation and the Period of Socialist Reconstruction), a two-volume collection of 1236 folk songs (1378 pages), almost all of them in praise of Enver, were published by the Institute of Folklore in 1967 and 1969 respectively.

in Albanian has been flourishing for the last two decades. Although the Albanian population in Yugoslavia is almost exclusively Gheg, the Albanian writers there have chosen, for sheer political reasons, to write in Tosk, which is in fact a camouflaged Gheg. True, the shift from Gheg to Tosk in most writers (lately in all of them) is a recent development. But we must also take into account that the twin literatures have in common socialist inspiration. Yugoslavia has been experiencing its own brand of socialist revolution, which is reflected in the works of most of the Albanian writers in that country. But since Yugoslavia has allowed considerable freedom of expression, an official literary doctrine has not prevailed there, and alongside with a Marxist-oriented literature, various trends have developed which either pay lip service to Marxism, or ignore it altogether. Apart from the nationalist concern underlying the writings of all Albanians in Yugoslavia, their styles differ widely, for each expresses himself according to his own mind and chosen models. Literature in exile usually rejects leftist ideology (Stalinism, or socialism in general), while remaining rooted in the national tradition, or gravitating around it.

2. *Socialist Realism: Rayahs and Kolkhozniks.*

For reasons already explained in the essay on shepherds and peasants (p. 90-1), we shall limit our inquiry to the portrayal of peasantry. That Albanian literature after the liberation has a marked peasant character does not suprise anyone, since Albanian socialism is primarily an agricultural revolution involving socio-economic transformations in the country as a whole. Agrarian reform and the ensuing collectivization of agriculture are capital events in the history of the nation which cannot fail to be reflected in literature. Our inquiry will focus on how these events have been reflected. It is known that writers have been encouraged and even required to sojourn in the countryside in order to observe the new conditions of life there and study the reactions of the peasants. Such an approach to reality, characteristic of naturalism, is in itself little reassuring. The worst part of it is that the reportage has to be ratified by those in power.

The approach has resulted in the polarization of types (in the pejorative sense of the word). Two of these types are prevalent, each characterizing the two main periods into which Albanian history has been divided: the rayah for the pre-socialist period, and the kolkhoznik (the word fell in desuetude after the break with the Soviet Union) for the socialist period. According to socialist realism, the peasant

living under feudal regimes, herein including monarchy, was a rayah whose miserable life was at the mercy of the landlord supported by the government, his ally. The peasant who could not endure such servitude had either to migrate, or go into hiding. The phenomena were indeed common, as our previous essay has shown. But the alternative was rather the exception than the rule, and servitude was far from general. The great majority of the peasants, and almost all of those living in mountainous sites, were free. A free peasant was subject to the government only. He could be very poor indeed, and hardly eke out his living by laboring on his lot. And in case he did not have any land, he could still hire out his labor. Such a proletarian's condition could, and often did, lead to servitude. But usually a free peasant owned his cottage and a parcel of land, a cow or some sheep, he had the same rights as a richer fellow, he and his family were entitled to honor and respect and could not be abused with impunity. To his category belonged not only Moslem peasants in general, but also Christian ones (the so-called rayahs): almost all the Catholics and most of the Orthodox. The latter used to pay to the Turkish government a special tax (*xhize*), which was abolished in 1855. Servitude implied various unpaid services to landlords who in turn exercised various feudal rights (police, judicial, fiscal) over unfree peasants, mainly afflicted sharecroppers in the large estates in the central-southern coastal plains.

Socialist realism gives a distorted picture of the peasant situation in the past by oversimplifying it according to the following equation: peasant = rayah = serf, who is exploited and oppressed by the landlord as well as by the government and the clergy, his allies. The kolkhoznik is almost the exact reverse of the former type according to this other equation: collectivized peasant = owner in common = real owner, who has been freed and assisted by the popular government = the Party = Enver. The kolkhoznik type, first patterned after the Soviet model, has undergone a certain evolution, in keeping with the gradual transformation of the landscape and the rural community. While the rayah is largely an imaginary type, the kolkhoznik is a real one. The trouble is that socialist realism depicts him in such a way as to make him look unreal. We pass to concrete examples, taken from what is considered the cream of Albanian socialist realism.

Since Albania has little arable land, opening new fields was a paramount task. Public works were started as early as 1946 in the marsh of Maliq in the periphery of Korçë. The objective was to drain the marsh within that year by voluntary labor on the part of peasants from the adjacent zone. The lack of machinery and construction ma-

terial proved from the outset to be an unsurmountable obstacle, and the enthusiasm of the workers waned. Some of them left, others stopped working. The conditions of work were unsatisfactory, its organization poor, and the management suffered from interference by political bosses. The project was in deep trouble. All of a sudden the reason for the failure was voiced in the press and public meetings: sabotage. Those responsible for the direction of operations were arrested, and shortly afterwards a trial took place in Tirana. Two of the four defendants, all of them engineers, had graduated from the Tirana Technical School whose former director, Harry Fultz, was a member of the then American Military Mission in Albania. He emerged from the trial as chief organizer of a conspiracy to undermine the economy of the Republic. The defendants were found to be members of the conspiracy and chief culprits for the sabotage activities in the Maliq operations. They were executed, some of them by hanging in the very place of work. The American mission left the country in the midst of indignant accusations by the Albanian government (1964). As a consequence, diplomatic relations between the United States and Albania could not be reestablished and have remained broken ever since.

The Marsh (1959) by Fatmir Gjata is based on this historical trial. A former schoolteacher from Korçë and a representative socialist writer, the recipient of the Prize of the Republic for his novel *Tana,* Gjata (b. 1922) is familiar with the Maliq environment, and many minute details in his novel suggest that his narrative stems from experience. We shall not discuss here whether the sabotage was real, or invented. But if the writer's intention was to present it as real, his way of telling it produces the opposite effect. He starts by remarking that engineer Shaqiri, a former member of an anti-communist organization, made an error in his calculation while directing the construction of a road. The error resulted in two unnecessary turns of the road: « I did not do it on purpose, but I was pleased afterwards and I said to myself: Why not sabotage still more? (p. 98)[21]. The illative sentence — the narrator speaks of miscalculation in the first clause, whereas his last clause transforms the miscalculation into an act of sabotage — betrays the narrator's doubt of the reality of the latter. Shaqiri then persuades engineer Sharra to visit Fultz. In the ensuing meeting, Fultz proposes his plan of economic sabotage to his former pupil whom he is seeing for the first time after many years. And when Sharra hesitates to join the conspiracy, Fultz wins him over by calling him by his old nick-name, as if he

[21] Pagination refers to *Këneta,* Prishtinë, « Rilindja », 1969.

were his pet. The canny American keeps in touch with the conspirators through Zyraka, the wife of engineer Minga. A beautiful woman, she flirts with practically everybody, and almost all fall under her spell. She first persuades her reluctant husband to join the conspiracy, then seduces Sharra, the director of the works, who is still undecided; and finally, advised by Fultz, she tries to seduce the Party Secretary — and here she fails. Zyraka is the one who holds the threads of the sabotage plan, the conspirators are puppets in her hands. The reader is left in the dark as to the motivation for her dangerous game — all he learns is that she is of foreign origin. With a beautiful German cast in a Mata Hari role, the detective story is complete. Her case, moreover, turns out to be typical. Says a colonel to the Party Secretary: « Once when I was serving in Scutari, I too found in my hotel room, on my bed, a woman like her. And I found out, after due investigation, that she was not only a whore but also a a spy » (p. 372).

It goes otherwise when Gjata tells of the working conditions. We understand the meaning of « volunteer » in the scene where a Party agitator puts pressure on a reluctant old peasant to let her daughter-in-law enlist as a volunteer:

> « Comrade, you don't love the Party »! [...]
> « I protest, comrade »!
> « Then why don't you let your daughter-in-law join in? [...] Ah, did you say you would? Oh well, then, very well! We're in full agreement. Enlist Shpresë, comrade » (p. 169).

We learn of the arrogance of peasant leaders threatening the director:

> « I have no tents » he said, and started off.
> « One moment! In the name of the workers, I demand them from you »! said Liman dryly.
> « I can't become a tent myself ».
> « Find them! It's your job as the boss »! replied the peasant holding his pick » (p. 178).

Sure enough, the director finds the tents after this injunction — they have been lying in the storehouse, unused, we are told. We are also told that the workers did not have enough water to drink and that they sometimes drank from the marsh (p. 203); that the hygiene was lamentable (swarms of flies in the kitchen, p. 292; no water-closets, p. 286); that spoons and dishes were being stolen (p. 328).

Gjata who is truthful in relating details such as these excels in the portrayal of folkloric episodes full of peasant humor. A horse belonging to one family has mounted a mare belonging to another family, thus affecting the latter's honor. The result is a gun-fight (p. 152). The peasants pretend not to understand the meaning of *garë* « emulation », a magic word in the communistic jargon, the key to any success:

> « Came the Party delegate and said: 'Emulation, emulation, and again emulation! Sow by emulation, and I assure you succes'! [...] But what is this emulation? Never heard of it! Is it edible? is it tasty? » (p. 150).

The winner of an emulation contest has been given a picture as a gift. Since the peasant, a Moslem, does not know what to do with the picture of that « priest », the Party delegate explains to him that the picture is Marx's. Replies the peasant:

> « It won't do, comrade Stavro, my wife won't believe it. She will say: 'What is this, man? Are you in your right mind? You're ruining our faith with that priest! To hell with him! Give it back to him who gave it to you, or else I'll leave you! [...] Don't you see they have poked fun at you' »? (p. 236-7).

The author has the Party Secretary refute the Director's argument, first advanced by an Italian engineer, that the marsh of Maliq could not be drained within the time limit set by the Party:

> « First of all, Omodeo was a bourgeois engineer and he expressed that judgment a quarter of a century ago. Now the government belongs to the people and we will drain Maliq relying on our own capacities. With manual work. And we won't lack workers. Do you need more than ten thousand »? [...]
> « You mean volunteers? asked Sharra.
> « Volunteers, of course. Does this astonish you? » (p. 140).

Volunteer labor was followed by slave labor. Political prisoners worked in the marsh in subsequent years in working conditions much worse than those described by the author [22]. Those who lived through those conditions can verify that the opinions expressed by Omodeo

[22] See my *Libri i burgut* (The Prison Book), 1959, notes pp. 200-4.

and other engineers were correct. Gjata could not possibly have written a novel such as the one he wrote, had he been free to choose a version of the Maliq trial other than the official one.

Jakov Xoxa (b. 1923), a native of Fier, the main town in the Myzeqe plain, is the author of *The Dead River* (1967), hailed by Albanian criticism as a masterpiece of socialist narrative. The theme is the hardships and revolts of the rayahs and poor peasants of Myzeqe before the liberation. « Tit for Tat » can be considered as a first sketch of that novel which had more than one edition. We quote from the beginning of this short story [23]:

> Kozi was not unlike the rest of them in the world, except for a mustache which in his time was considered as the only sign of a man's dignity. [...]
>
> He came out of his house in the morning and gazed at the corn fields from the bank of the Droughty River. Stunted ears of corn clung to the withered stalks like pallid children to the barren bosoms of their mothers. The lifeless ear-tips of corn drooped, and although Kozi gave a twist upwards to the tips of his mustaches, the ears of corn remained all the while in their old drooping position. [...]
>
> And on his way home Kozi's memory turned to an old, forgotten story: the history of the Droughty River, which was once called the Blessed River, where the Holy Cross was dipped every year. Its waters would irrigate the fields, fill our jars and quench our thirst. But the feudal lord one day turned these waters to run a mill he had set up above the village, away from its natural bed: and from that time on it became the Droughty River. One night Kozi's grandfather had led a group of villagers carrying shovels and pickaxes and had turned the waters to their natural course. But the waters did not reach the fields that night, for it was absorbed by the dried up soil along its way. It was only the next morning that the fields by the banks of the Blessed River got drenched, but in blood: grandpa was murdered by the lord's henchmen.
>
> Kozi was absorbed in thoughts as he plodded along the river bed. The soil he was treading on had cracked like the parched lips of a sick man craving for a drop of water.

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[23] The excerpts are from *Albanian Contemporary Prose* (Tirana, 1963), an anthology for outside consumption (pagination refers to that edition; the text has been occasionally amended, including punctuation).

The rayah character stands out, but the anthropomorphic similes are farfetched while the hyperbole of the « fields [...] drenched [...] in blood » is ludicrous. Kozi is also the name of the character in the novel who tells the story of « the dead river », a variant of that of « the droughty river »:

> « Listen, host! We're surrounded by waters, we dabble in the mire like ducks. And yet there is no potable water. Why so? you ask. Because of the salt water. The saline marsh on the South and the East, on the West the sea, and on the North the bed of the Dead River, dry in summer and cracked like our lips, but roaring in winter from the sea waves rushing between its banks and inundating the village » [24].

The simile of the « cracked [...] lips » reappears, this time in a different context. The author has realized that the story of the murder in « Tit for Tat » is unconvincing and has therefore contrived a subtler scheme:

> The bey of Lisbegas first purchased a small lot from an old woman who went to Pojan to live with her daughter — it was enough to intrude in the village. Next his superintendents [plural in the text] came and within a year a mansion rose in the midst of the village. [...]*That same year* [italics added] the bey laid his hands on the village's lands and meadows, on the wheat- and corn-fields, and the peasant of Lumth woke up one day to find themselves, within the span of *twenty-four hours* [italics added], tenant farmers and rayahs.
>
> ... The whole village rose, they wanted to raze his mansion to the ground. And what did they do? They took the bey to court, and the judge ruled in his favor (pp. 109-9).

The judge based his sentence, we are further told, on the fact that the river which constituted the boundary dividing the bey's estate from the village's lands had in the meantime changed its course so as to encompass the latter. To prove his point, Xoxa does not hesitate to make nature itself, let alone the judge, an accomplice of the bey. *The Dead River* is hopelessly inflated and farfetched. Suat Bey Vërdhoma, the villain of the story, is a character worthy of comic books. He whips his chief superintendent in public for an oversight, and the superintendent kisses his foot to be spared further whipping.

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[24] *Lumi i vdekur*, Tirana, « Naim Frashëri », p. 106.

But in his mansion, the bey is unable to rape a peasant girl — the heroine — who resists his assault. The Christian girl has vowed herself to her Moslem Kosovar lover who, in order to persuade her to elope with him, has told her a « true » story. It is about a Kosovar couple whom Serbian frontier guards intercept while trying to cross over into « mother Albania ». He fights back, is mortally wounded and later blinded. Thinking him dead, they day him in a coffin, a handkerchief on his eyes, to carry him to his mother. Suddently, the young man in the coffin jumps to his feet and sings: « Don't bandage my eyes with a handkerchief, for I am an Albanian from Kosovo »! (p. 494). These lines, taken from a folk song, exalt Albanian heroism, a recurrent motif in Albanian folklore as well as romantic literature. Albanian socialist realism is naïvely sentimental, and a better name for it is socialist neo-romanticism.

Xoxa's last novel, *The White South*, deals with collectivized agriculture. The setting is once more Myzeqe, a new village arisen on the ruins of Pojan (the Roman Apollonia). A journalist visits a man whose daughter is betrothed to his friend. Says the kolkhoznik [25]:

> « When the director of the cooperative does not know his business, his bad influence persists after he's gone. How so? you wonder. Well, an example is the orange and lemon groves of Badland. He planted them there, on wet soil, not heeding the name of the place, not asking for the elder's advice, and not even for that of the land itself, which could easily have told him how poor it was. I don't know where he had heard that « earth is a woman, there's no male earth ». That saying was always on the tip of his tongue—one would say the planting was done with it rather than with hoes and shovels. Now we all know that earth is indeed a woman, but exactly for that reason one must know what to plant in it. To make it short, nothing came out, although the cooperative spent millions on planting and growing, and millions too were spent by the state for the irrigation of Badland. [...] Luckily, one day one of those big shots came from Tirana. He saw the waste, both of land and time, then said: 'If you're not going to till that land yourself, I'll have a bulldozer go over those oranges and level them out' ».
>
> « [...] Here you see both slopes of the Badland valley. If that slope down underneath Apollonia were not wet soil,

[25] From « Juga e bardhë », in *Nëndori* (1970) 1, pp. 5-6.

> the ancients would not have built their tombs on this slope. They naturally went in search of west soil for the living and dry soil for the dead. But our people had no eyes. Orange trees that thirst for water dry up when drowned in water ».
>
> [...] The cajolery of the lemon blossoms moved by a warm breeze and the persistence of the bee to enter them and fetch what she wanted impressed me strangely. I suddenly asked:
>
> « Did they know each other, or were they betrothed by a go-between »?
>
> « [...] My son, times have changed in this Myzeqe of ours! Can you imagine a blossom going in search of a bee »?

The allusion is to the girl making advances to the boy and not viceversa, as it used to be in the old days. Xoxa makes the point well, while immediately scoring another point through imagery suggesting that marriages in the past were made in order to secure allies in the continuous struggle for life that meant eliminating the weaker:

> « This was the way things were done then, for we were surrounded by enemies. And enemies make you look for friends at any price. But many enemies amount to your being an enemy to yourself. And a faithful friend is secured either by marriage bonds or bloodshed. So that life was always paying to death a tribute of a third of itself ».

In comparing Xoxa's language in *The Dead River* with that of *The White South*, one cannot fail to notice a remarkable progress. The changed aspect of the countryside is rendered in language that is devoid of the usual clichés, imagery is adherent to the content, achieving at times genuine lyricism. Reading Xoxa's recent narrative as well as the poetry of the new generation of socialist poets — Kadare, Agolli, Shkreli —, one realizes that a new literature is burgeoning which is no longer a dull repetition of ready-made recipes fresh from the Party's printing shop.

Little time will be spent here with poets of the older generation to whom the last observation mostly applies. Sejfullah Malëshova (189?-197?), the father of communist literature in Albania, published his *Poems* in 1945. Written in exile before the liberation, they are in both traditional and classical meters, though international in spirit — Malëshova studied in Rome and lived in Moscow for years. He soon fell into disgrace because of his alleged chauvinism and western sympathies — he loved to quote Dante and one of his poems sings of Albania stretching « from Antivari to Ioannina ». Perhaps his best

poem is a stylized version of a folk song celebrating the death of a band of peasant haiduks. After his political death, literature became strictly subservient to the rigid ideology of the Party and poetry degenerated into tedious encomia for Party leaders and versification of Party slogans.

Petro Marko (b. 1913), who fought in the International Brigades in Spain — *Hasta la vista* (Prize of the Republic) is a novel describing that experience — introduced new rhythms under the influence of Mayakovsky (« Horizon in a Wallet » is of 1940). His naturally nonconformist and undisciplined verse soon fell away from the official line, and he practically abandoned poetry for the narrative. The most promising of the poets, Llazar Siliqi (b. 1925), underwent a steady involution. A good start with *Prishtina,* and with Mayakovsky as model, led gradually to pastiches and patchwork. *Resurrection* contains, in its third part, a vivid illustration of the traditional Albanian hospitality: a Gheg highlander hides from the poet, his guest, the death of his only son (whose corpse lies in the house awaiting for burial) in order to spare the visitor a distressing sight. And the poet comments, addressing himself to the dead man's mother who has also shown no sign of distress:

O Albanian mother,
brave and hospitable,
le me be
your son,
o mother!
Now
I know better
how this people could
remain
so free,
how they could endure
difficult times,
how they could stand
bullets and
slavery,
and even poverty,
the bony witch.

We are back to Fishta, with a Migjenian touch.

This much for poetry. To find a decent playwright (the new theatre is stage performance of slogans), we must cross the border. Josip Rela (1895-1964) is from Arbanasi (Borgo Erizzo), an Albanian

village in Dalmatia near Zadar which was founded by Gheg highlanders in 1726. Most of Rela's twelve plays and comedies — collected in *Works* (1968) —, all written in the archaic Gheg dialect of his native village, have the latter for setting, and almost all of them deal with peasant problems, old and new. Rela is attentive to the ethos of his ethnic group without letting his sensitivity to social differentiatons be blurred. *Nita*, his best play, dramatizes the antinomy between eros and ethos. The tribal law bestowed the status of a man on a girl who vowed not to marry in special cases; for instance, when no male was left in the house. She could dress like a man, smoke a pipe, carry a gun, and do almost everything a male could do [26]. Nita is a case in point. A beautiful girl from Brisk, a village overlooking the Lake of Scutari, she is abducted by a Moslem bey and then saved by her friend Zef, who kills one of the bey's men. To escape the bey's vengeance, many families take the road of exile. In the new land where they settle, Nita requests that her status be changed to a man's, since Zef whom she loves has remained in the country. The elders approve of her request with a verdict sanctioned by the tribal chief and a priest. Suddenly Zef appears, and Nita breaks her vow. Judged by the elders, she is accused of cheating them and showing contempt for the customary law. Pleading in her favor, the tribal chief argues that she had already pledged herself to her lover, and that the law of the mountains cannot be enforced in the new land where others laws prevail. He finally convinces the elders, but in the meantime Nita has committed suicide.

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[26] Edith Durham writes in *Some Tribal Original Laws and Customs of the Balkans* (1928), pp. 194-5: « In one way only could a girl evade a marriage she disliked. If she could find twelve elders of her tribe group to act as con-jurors she could swear perpetual virginity. If she broke the vow, the honour of the con-jurors was blackened and a blood-feud ensued. It was not easy for her to find twelve con-jurors ». « Having succeeded and taken the vow in the church or mosque, her status is, I believe, unique. In the Maltsia e Madhe she can, if she pleases, dress as a man [a plate showing such a virgin is found p. 193]. She associates with men on equal terms, and eats and smokes with them. She may carry arms. » « I met altogether four virgins [...] I heard of three more. One in the Djakova district was said to have served in the Turkish army undetected ». « Among the Dukagini I met several virgins, but all wore women's dress. As a rule, in all districts, the sworn virgin became servant to one of the priests, and often joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Some became nuns and worked in one of the Scutari nunneries ». « One case only did I hear of a virgin breaking her vow. She had been for years servant to the priest of Baitza, and was accounted holy. On his death she was forty, and shocked the country-side by eloping with a Gusinje Moslem. No one dared follow to take vengeance in such a dangerous district, but it was piously hoped that she would pay the price of her crime in hell ».

3. *Land and Soil in the Poetry of Younger Writers.*

We now pass to consider that part of socialist literature which departs from socialist realism. The chief merit for the new orientation goes to a writer who first dared to break through its carapace, Ismail Kadare (b. 1936). The only contemporary Albanian writer with a foreign audience, Kadare is little interested in the countryside — he comes from Gjirokastër, a town with a tradition of culture — and most of his poems and novels deal with urban life. The novel, however, which made him famous, *The General of the Dead Army* (1963), is set partly in the capital and partly in the countryside, the latter being the more important of the two.

The Italian government has commissioned one of its generals to go to Albania and fetch the bones of the Italian soldiers fallen there during World War II. The general is keen on his patriotic mission, which he carries out amidst the silent hostility of the population. But as the exhumation goes on, he begins to show signs of fatigue. One day, bored to death, he decides to have some fun and goes to a village wedding, uninvited. According to the Albanian code of hospitality, a friend or an enemy is equally sacred while a guest. The peasant patriarch welcomes the general and treats him according to the custom. He drinks, then joins in a folk dance. Suddenly a woman steps forward and throws a bag in front of the general. The bag contains the bones of a colonel whom the woman murdered and then buried under the threshold of her house for attempting to dishonor her daughter. The general leaves in a hurry, carrying with him the bag of bones, which he later throws into a ravine.

The novel is a satire against Italian militarism as well as bourgeois patriotism whose foundations rest on soldier's bones. The author is both an Albanian and a communist, but first an Albanian and then a communist. He says a lot about Albanian ethos and habits, but almost nothing about Albanian communism, its leaders and institutions. His unorthodoxy consists first and foremost in never mentioning the Party in his novel. A characteristic tenet of Albanian communism, the celebration of work as a surrogate for heroism, is also ignored. The novel is decidedly anti-heroic, emphasis being laid on the intrinsic value of life, life enjoyed for its own pleasure (the wedding episode is very telling in this respect), regardless of ideological strings — another heresy. It is not a « roman de stature mondiale », as Robert Escarpit describes it in his preface to the French edition, but is the first Albanian novel that can stand the test of criticism. Whith this novel, as well as with his *Short and Long Poems* (1969), which are equally good, Kadare brings to distinction a literature

that for about twenty years has been an uninterrupted series of propaganda clichés devoid of artistic value, all from the same bag of socialist realism. Kadare's recent works show signs of compromise with the latter; the Albanian Yevtushenko seems to have yielded to official pressure and perhaps constraint.

It takes a peasant to write genuine peasant poems, and an Albanian Essenin has not yet appeared, Aleks Caçi (b. 1916) wrote an inspired poem, « Very well, Myzeqe! », immediately after the liberation, exulting at the social emancipation of his native Muzeqe following the agrarian reform. Comparing that poem to another written almost a quarter of a century later, « It is you, Muzeqe? », one cannot fail to notice that the author is now too old, too conditioned by his past, to identify with the new reality he celebrates, the collectivization of the countryside. We quote an excerpt [27]:

> One laughs for all,
> all laugh for one.
> A big broom has wiped
> all their wrinkles out.
> Where have the tears gone?
> Children no longer know how to cry.
> Old people have long forgotten
> to shed a bitter tear.

Çaçi is unable to find a new form for the new content. His case is instructive in that it helps explain why a peasant poetry — and literature in general — implying a new kind of peasant, the peasant-worker member of a collective, could not develop before a new generation, grown in the new political climate, entered the literary scene.

Besides Kadare, two other poets are representative of the new trend. Dritëro Agolli (b. 1931) and Ismail Arapi (b. 1930), rose with the wave of the cultural revolution, on whose crest they bravely stood. Arapi's verse (*Iron Verse*, 1969) is vigorous and forceful, but somewhat redundant. Agolli is surer of himself, while ostentating his peasant origin. In an earlier poem, « Devoll, Devoll! » — his native region — he boasts that he entered the League of Writers with a bag on his shoulders filled with country soil. The poem was prophetic, Agolli is Chairman of the Albanian League of Writers and Artists today. He asserted himself with two volumes of poetry, *Walking on Asphalt* (1961) and *Taking to the Street* (1962). His more recent poems show

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[27] *Nëndori* (1969) 12, pp. 58-9.

him determined to hold fast to his bag, resorting, when needed, to revolutionary violence. His poem « Labor » is a pertinent example [28]:

Kaltërojnë thellë nën thonjtë e tij thërmijat e tokës.
Thërmijat që erdhë prej arave e lëndinave
Kaltërojnë si vijat e hatës së botës;
Kaltërojnë si kordat e violinave.
S'lahen ato me sapun e ujë
Në asnjë banjë të shquar.
Toka hyri në brazdat e duarve pa bujë,
Siç hyn në parmendë nën pluar.
I njoh këta gishtrinj të ngrohtë,
Këta gishtrinj të mirë,
Tim eti i kaltëronte toka nën thonjtë
Edhe kur brenda qivurit ish shtrirë.
Dhe dukej sikur ende s'kish vdekur,
Por flinte pak për t'u çapitur prapë në tokë,
Si atëhere kur pa feksur,
Rrinte shtrirë me pëllëmbë nën kokë.

Under his nails the dirt is blue,
dirt from fields and meadows.
It's blue like the lines on the globe,
like violin strings.
No soap and water in bath tubs
can wash it away. The dirt
entered the furrows of these hands silently
as the plough digs into the earth.
I know these warm fingers,
these good fingers I know.
The nails of my father were blue
lying in his coffin.
He looked as if he were not dead,
but taking a nap before going to work,
as when at dawn
he would lie back, his head on his palms.

« The Cow » is another, more idyllic poem emphasizing the author's peasant origin [29]:

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[28] From « New Poems » in *Nëndori* (1971) 5, p. 147.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Lopa përtypet në grazhdin e mbushur me bar.
Unë pështes faqen në shpatullën e saj të madhe
Dhe ndjej nga thellësi e qënies së saj një zjarr.
Ky zjarr erdhi me barin që u mblodh në livadhe.
Mbi brirët e murmë ndrit llampa elektrike
E drita bije në kusinë me qumësht.
Mua nga lopa s'më iket,
Me faqe në shpatull ndjej qumështin me shkumë.
Mjelësja kusinë ngadalë merr
Dhe me duar me qumësht pret.
Më thotë: « Ju jini veteriner »?
Unë faqen nga lopa heq: « Jo, poet »!
Ajo buzëqesh dhe më vështron me sytë e kaltër,
Të bukur e të urtë si paqe;
Diçka mendon, diçka sjell në hatër
Dhe e kupton se unë pa lopë nuk shkruaj dot.

The cow ruminates in the manger of hay,
and I lean my cheek on her broad shoulder,
feeling a warmth coming from her inner depth,
the warmth of hay gathered in the meadows.
An electric lamp shines on her brown horns,
its light falls on the pail of milk.
I can't leave the cow, and smell
the foaming milk with my cheek on her shoulder.
The milk-woman takes away the pail,
waiting for me, her hands wet with milk.
She says: « Are you a vet »?
I lift my cheek from the cow: « No, I'm a poet »!
She smiles and looks at me with her blue eyes
beautiful and peaceful and wise.
She seems to remember something and realizes
that I can't write without a cow.

Modern poetry includes a dimension of authenticity. Agolli's black soil is indeed his treasure. « The Vineyard » is a poem and a poetics at one and the same time [30]:

Vargjet me kofina radhiten në vreshtë,
Vargje ku fle rakia dhe vera e mirë;
Vargje si vargjet në vjershë,

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

herë të matur, herë të lirë.
Askush s'u thotë vreshtarëve
Pse i radhitën kofinat në vargje të shkurtër a të gjatë.
Mjafton që prej vargjeve
Të dalë verë e trashë e raki njëzet gradë.

The baskets are set in rows in the vineyard,
rows of baskets where good brandy and wine
lie dormant, rows of baskets like
lines in verse, now measured now free.
No one asks the grape pickers
whether their baskets are set in long or short rows.
It's enough if from them comes
thick wine and brandy of a hundred degrees.

Azem Shkreli (b. 1938) comes from a peasant family of Rugovë, a mountainous distrect near Pejë (Peć). He published a first collection of poems, *Buds*, while a high school student and won a prize with his novel *The White Caravan* (1961). *Angels on the Roads* (1963) includes « Archaic Songs », one of which (« Në Shkrel ») is an evocation of his native village and the time when he was a shepherd there:

Për vath e vorre, thonë pleqt, heret ki'n pasë zanë vend Etnit
malsorë n'cikol, me grigja, tue lypë kullosë.
S'ia dreshtën rrëkajës së rês, as dimnit acarit kur t'sosë.
Gëzimin e ndajnë si bukën. Mordjen e qajnë me 'i lot.
Me ujq e shpendë fqij mali ki'n qenë at ditë e sot.
Emnin ma të bukur ua ngjesin fëmijve Ujk e Shpend.

Rigat shullajeve bredhin. N'krepa luejnë rêt me rrëfe.
Përzie me pisha rriten vashat syshkrueme si fier.
Plakat përtrijnë kujtime pikllimin ndër furka tue tier.
« Me bija t'sodit », ankohen, « mos o zot!... S'â punë:
Na dolën kandit! Na zunë me shkelë kanunë »!
Gurin e venë n'krye t'djalit malsoret kur bajnë be.

Marrë blegrimën shtërrija turren rrëmisht me thithë
Gjujzuemun tambël sykash kah bardh' shpatijeve vijnë.
(A thue nji tufë e vogël n'sukë e njef barinë?)
Ndër oda burrash tash kotet harrimit lahuta:
Kreshnikët e rij s'e masin si moti trimnin me huta.
Arat e holla n'për rrëpija parmenda haxhuze s'i grrithë.

Nën shpat nji shpi me drrasa, me trêj t'përkulun rrëmeti,
Nën fishkuj t'motit shpejt do t'mbetet shej gërmadhe,
E as s'ka me i ra ndër mend kujt (punë e madhe!)

Se aty mes currash, ku thonë: ban dreqi vé,
Dhe drêjt kullosin n'hanë—paska pasë lé
Nana malsore, pahiri, dikur, njifarë poeti...

Our ancestors, the elders say, looking for pastures,
settled on these rocks sheltering sheepfolds and graves.
They were not afraid of showers and freezing weather,
sharing joys like bread and shedding one tear for one dead.
And ever since they have had wolves and birds of prey
for neighbors,
calling their children — and they're favored names — Wolf and
Bird.

Creeks run down the slopes, on the cliffs clouds sport with
thunder,
girls with fern-like eyes grow among pine-trees.
Old women remembering old times spin on their distaffs
lamenting new customs: « O God, these daughters of ours,
they went astray, trampling the canons »! And mothers
still swear with a stone laid on their children's heads.

Bleating lambs rush and kneel by their mothers
and suckle them as they come down the slopes shining white
(does a small herd on a hill recognize its shepherd?).
In the rooms of men the lute hangs and sleeps,
no longer do heroes measure valor with bullets,
nor does the old plough scratch the tiny fields in the rocks.

The weathered cottage with sagging beams
will soon be a ruin on the slope.
And no one will remember — but who cares? —
that among these rocks where the devil lays eggs
and deer graze in moonlight a highland
mother once happened to bear a poet.

Shkreli, like his elderly Rela, is concerned with reconciling his loyalty to his native mountains and his socialist faith with the old customs of this wildest region of Kosovo (In Moslem Rugovë, men still wrap their heads with white linen that will eventually serve as a shroud). The contrasting elements clash in this young poet who still has to find his own voice. While « Homecoming » often echoes Camaj, « Outcry » is reminiscent of both Migjeni and Agolli [31]:

[31] *Nëndori* (1970) 12, p. 223.

Toka jonë e mirë, toka jonë e pagojë
Do ta shtrydh fjalën derisa gjak t'i pikojë
Të të flas nga gjaku, pastaj fjalës sime
T'i vijë erë e gurit, erë e farës së mbime.
Thepohem me ty mbi valët e çdo shtërgate
Të bëhem një grusht dhe i mirë i arës sate.

Our good earth, our mute earth,
I'll squeeze from her a word until she bleeds.
I'll speak to her with words of blood,
smelling the stone, the sprouting seed.
I lean with you on the crest of the storms
to become a handful of good earth from your field.

4. *Poetry in Exile.*

Martin Camaj (b. 1927) was for a time a member of the Albanian group of poets in Yugoslavia. His first collections, *A Flute in the Mountains* (1953) and *Songs of Lowland Pastures* (1954) show him to be a poet with a definite poetic theme, that of his native Dukagjin. Not the exile's nostalgia, but a sense of belonging sharpened by exile inspires these poems. Faithfulness to one's origins is a leitmotif in Camaj's poetry, witness « My Country »[32]:

Kur të vdes le të bahem bar
në malet e mija në pranverë,
në vjeshtë do të bahem farë.

Kur të vdes le të bahem ujë
e fryma e eme avull,
në fusha do të bij si shí.

Kur të vdes të bahem gur
në skanjin e vendit tem
të qindroj gjithmonë kufî.

When I shall die I would wish to become grass
on my mountains in springtime,
in the fall I would grow seeds.

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[32] *Shêjzat* (1957) 1, p. 10.

When I shall die I would wish to become water,
my breath a cloud
raining on the fields.

When I shall die I would wish to become a stone,
on the boundary of my soil
a landmark.

Between Fishta's epic verse exalting the heroism of the highlanders and Migjeni's epic prose deploring their squalor, Camaj strikes a middle chord which is neither praise nor pity, but a deeper, almost physical sense of identity with his own land. *Diella* (1958), a biographical novel interspersed with poems, is about a schoolteacher who falls in love with a lowland village girl wo finally marries a driver. The poet's disenchantment with the rural milieu is apparent in many episodes, some of which portray degenerate characters, including a prostitute. The narrator feels sorry for them, but even more so for himself, a being who has forfeited his highland nature without achieving the status of the liberated intellectual. His existential drama is best shown in the following poem (p. 41):

Dy gjana print më than' kur ishin gjallë:
Poqese shkel ti buken gand,
Çoje prej dheut, puthe e vene në ball!
Ndëgjo, ti djal, pse na jemi pleq.
Kur t'rrijsh te votra pështetë tue pi duhan,
Mos pështyej në dritë, pse â keq!

Kam harrue shum sende që m'i thanë print,
Shum tjera m'sova e dola ndoshta i lárm;
Por bijve të mij un kam me u than' tu'u rritë;
Mos shkelni bukën,
Mos pështyni në zjarm,
Mos pështyni në dritë.

I remember my parents' advice:
« If you happen to tread upon bread,
lift it to your forehead and kiss it!
Listen, son, to your elders!
And when you smoke at the corner of the hearth,
don't spit on the fire,
don't spit on the light »!

My parents taught me many things that I forgot,
many others I learned, ending up perhaps a mongrel.
Yet to my sons I'll say when they grow up:
Don't tread upon bread!
Don't spit on the fire!
Don't spit on the light!

The feeling of such a heritage has not left the poet during his European wanderings [33]. Unlike the poets previously reviewed, Camaj is bound to traditional values by a sense of loyalty. In *Middle Age Poems* (1967), his Albanian backgraund is vicariously present in landscapes related to the Albanian villages of Southern Italy whose dialects he has been studying. « Second Spring » gives an idea of Camaj's mature poetry:

Pranvera e dytë vjen me zjarm
e bulzat pëlsasin në degë.

Rrugë.
I shkreti trup i ri
i lëmuen prej breshnit të njimij
drita syshë. Ai trup ka zemër!

Zyfti qi kapet për këpucë
ka pluhën, thumba kundrash,
biljeta tramesh dhe muzikën
e hapave të panjehun
mes pikave të shiut në dimën.

Anavet të udhës këndojnë xhingallat
e copa copa na lëshojnë ndër duer verën.

The second spring comes with fire
and the buds spring on the twigs.

A street.
Poor young body
polished by the nail of a thousand
looks. That body has a heart.

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[33] Camaj studied Albanology at the University of Belgrade, then went to Rome where he finished his linguistic studies and became editor of the Albano-Italian periodical *Shêjzat*. Later he moved to Munich, where he lives today, a professor of Albanian at the University of Munich.

The asphalt that sticks to the heels
carries dust and shoe nails,
streetcar tickets and a music
of innumerable steps
among drops of winter rain.

On the edges of the road the cicadas sing
throwing into our hands fragments of summer.

The poetry of Arshi Pipa (b. 1920) was all written in Albania [34]. *The Prison Book* (1959) is a lyrical account of his captivity years. *Rusha* (1968), which was also written in prison, « is a tale of love and vendetta between Albanians and Serbs in the second half of the 14th century. The story takes place in a village situated somewhere between Djakova [Djakovica] and Prizren. The traditional mores and customs of the Northern Albanians constitute the warp and woof of the epic, in line with the local medieval code known as the Code of Lek Dukagjini » [35]. Yet, « the epic's underlying idea » is « the symbiosis of the Albanians and Serbs in the Middle Ages », and « the language of the epic, [is] a sort of koiné of Northern Albanian idioms tempered by forms of the Scutarene dialect » [36]. In greater part the poem is in dialogue form, action prevails over narrative, the cantos are like scenes, and the division of the poem in three « books », including a prologue and an epilogue, suggests a three-act compositional structure [37].

Pipa, who was born to a bourgeois family, came to know peasants in prison. His portrayal of them is that of an urban writer who sympathizes with them. « Neli », in *The Prison Book*, is about a peasant who, ravaged by malaria and starving, endures his fate stoically without ever complaining. « Visiting day » portrays the expecta-

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[34] Pipa's first volume of verse, *Sailors*, appeared in 1944. During that year he edited a review, *Kritika letrare* (Literary Criticism). After the liberation, he was on the editorial board of *Bota e re* (New World), the organ of the League of Albanian Writers. A political prisoner from 1946 to 1956, he escaped to Yugoslavia, and then went to the United States, where he has been teaching Italian in various schools (he studied in Florence).

[35] *Rusha*, Foreword, p. 12.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[37] In his review of the poem, A. Logoreci notes its dramatic element: « Rusha is the name of the Albanian Juliet who falls in love with, and gets secretely engaged to, a Serbian Romeo called Melisdrav. [...] The poetry, which is remarkably simple and sober in tone, sparkles with an almost Racinian sense of control. The language of this strange tale is archaic by choice... » (*Books Abroad*, November 1969).

tion of peasant prisoners to see their parents or relatives and then enjoy a full meal [38]:

Pëllet mbi breg gomari. Gomari çka pëllet?
Bukë shtëpie, dy dorza djathi, nji qyp bylmet.
nji stan, shqerrat qi lozin e qét e mbryem në pêndë,
afshin e tokës s'majme qi hapet me parmêndë.

Ka çelë mbi shkâmb lofata, frŷnë era e butë e detit
tue mbartun mera e tinguj, n'oborret e qytetit
lëshojnë tash hie mândat. Gjelbëroi tutje shpati,
nji tufë si rê pëllumbash po vjen nga Dunavati.

The braying of a donkey on the hill:
homemade bread, two hand cheeses, a pot of butter,
a fold, lambs playing, a yoke of oxen
and the smell of the fat earth turned by the plough.

The briar on the rock is in bloom, the sea breeze
brings sounds and fragrance, the mulberries in the courtyards
have shadows. The slope is green,
from Dunavat comes a cloud of doves.

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[38] « Visiting Day was an event in the prison life. The visitors in the Gjirokastër prison were usually people from that city and also peasants from the surrounding area. The great majority of the prisoners who were from the regions of Peshkopi, Elbasan and Durrës had visits very seldom since their families could not travel that far ». (*The Prison Book*, note p. 206). The prison was the fortress of Gjirokastër; Dunavat is a quarter of that city.

V.

SOCIOLOGY OF ALBANIAN LITERATURE

Our inquiry has shown that Albanian literature is inseparable from Albanian politics and that a study of the former amounts to a sociological study of the various manifestations of Albanian nationalism. Literature as an occupation characterizing a special type, the *letterato*, has never existed in Albania, and ethnocentrism underlies even those writings that seem to be farthest from political concern. What is Naim Frashëri thinking, when he sets out to write the bucolic poem praising the « mountains of Albania with the tall oak-trees, / and her vast flowering plains »? In the back of his mind is his fear that his native village may fall to the Greeks. An Albanian author wields the pen like a gun and approaches the page as if it were a battlefield. Memory of the past conditions him to that attitude, for only by fighting hard against successive invaders have the Albanians managed to preserve the ethnic distinction represented by their language. We started this book by pointing out the liturgical role of some Arbëresh folk songs, and quoted from the earliest poetic monument, the Chieuti Codex: « O Lord and St. Mary, ... help the Albanians... where they lie and languish, / for they, poor people, are few »! On the other hand, representatives of Albanian communism, which boasts of having fathered the first atheistic state in the world [1], extoll Catholic priests as great patriots when their literary works served the cause of nationalism. Franco Bardhi (Franciscus Blancus), a student of Propaganda Fide, which published his *Dictionarium* in 1635, wrote a work on Scanderbeg, *Georgius Castriotus, vulgo Scanderbeg, Epirotarum Princeps fortissimus ac invictissimus, suis et patriae restitutus,* to refute the thesis of a Bosnian bishop, Tomeus Marnavitius, that Scanderbeg was of Bosnian origin. « We see from all this that Bardhi is a real historian and an able writer », we read in the official *History of Albanian literature* [2].

Our inquiry has also shown that Albanian literature presents a marked tendency towards epic heroism, while shirking realism as a

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[1] *Nëndori,* September 1967 issue. Quoted by P. Prifti in « The Albanian Party of Labor and the Intelligentsia », *East European Quarterly* 3 (1974), p. 35.

[2] I, p. 225.

rule. We have laid bare the infrastructure of epic heroism by going back to the pastoral mode of life conditioning it. The picture of the Albanian shepherd carrying a rifle as well as a staff is understood against a socio-economic background in which the rifle secures the property symbolized by the staff. Today cartoons show pupils holding a book in one hand, a rifle in the other. And since gun culture breeds heroic bombast, one realizes why socialist realism is both wordy and vociferous. We have explained why, among Albanian authors, the only ones who are sensitive to social problems are Orthodox writers, the reason being their second-rate social status as rayahs or naturalized Albanians. Our study of the Arbëresh literary tradition has revealed that the exploitation of the Italo-Albanian sharecroppers on the part of lay or ecclesiastic Italian landlords was adroitly used by Arbëresh Byzantine priests to exercise hegemony over those peasants while perpetuating their ethnic and religious isolation. As a consequence, a literature arose, mostly the work of gentry ostentating noble origins, which glorifies both chivalric heroism and ancestral religion.

The inquiry has made clear the organic ties between literature and folklore, explaining why Albanian literature has a strong rural flavor. The history of Albania is that of its shepherds and peasants rather than that of its city dwellers, and this is true for present-day Albania as well. The infatuation of socialist realism with folklore is motivated by a conscious desire to root itself in the national tradition. Let us not forget that Albanian communism first took power, and then created a working class, which had hardly existed in Albania before World War II, in order to justify the Leninist doctrine of the peasant-worker alliance. The lack of socialist tradition has been compensated by a tradition of nationalism which has its monument in epic heroic folk songs.

Idealistic aesthetics dispenses with the socio-economic base of literature, considering the latter as irrelevant for artistic judgments. Kant conceived of art as an activity of the mind somehow mysteriously espousing nature's finalism and thus creating new forms for the mind to contemplate in disinterested enjoyement. On the grounds of theories such as this, literatures of the Albanian type would be denied literary membership. Much more helpful is Vico's concept of language laboriously generating, by virtue of its own dearth (*inopia*), myths that are articulations of praxis and thought. In *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, Schiller elaborates on the contrast between what he termes « naïve », i.e. primitive, irreflexive, immediate, and « sentimental », i.e. introspective and sophisticated. The first kind is found

today in ethnic culture cut off from the main stream of civilization, whereas the second kind characterizes saturated civilizations.

Albanian literature is naïve in this sense. The fact that Albanian writers produce their best works when they are young is telling in this respect. Albanian poetry usually exhausts itself after a short and intense, almost explosive period, unable to reach the equilibrium of maturity, and thus endure. The umbilical chord that ties it to folklore keeps the Albanian author at the intersection of the id and the superego, to speak in Freudian terms. And when he, eager to compete with writers of highly civilized nations, relinquishes that position, he gropes or goes astray, lacking the self-assurance that only a superior culture can breed. The deflection occurs during the writer's maturity as a rule, the age when honorific titles and official recognition are bestowed on the writer. Tempted by them, he takes postures as a seer, a preacher, a hero, or plays roles as an ideologist or a statesman. The following examples bear witness to the almost axiomatic truth that poetry declines when rhetoric, official or academic, prevails, and that the closer an author comes to the Forum, the farther he is from the Capitol.

The really important Albanian works were consistently written by authors in their prime, while their later works were invariably weaker and often deficient. De Rada wrote *Milosao* in his green years, when his still vivid classical reminiscences fused with his original perceptions of nature to produce a hybrid of unique flavor, but he never repeated that accomplishment. Fishta wrote the best of the *Highland Lute* with true inspiration, under the combined impact of the Gheg rhapsodies and the Serbo-Croatian epic poetry which he had assimilated in his youth. The rest of the epic is manifestly inferior to its earlier part. The case of Schirò is particularly telling in this respect. His earliest work, *Albanian Rhapsodies,* was such a successful imitation of Arbëresh folk songs that the supercherie went unnoticed. *Mili and Haidhia,* his masterpiece, is an idyl in a stylized popular manner. Then Schirò moved to the epic, in an attempt to achieve what De Rada had failed to with his *Unfortunate Scanderbeg. In the Foreign Land* had two editions, the first of which is the better. *Homecoming,* a later epic heavy with ideology, marks a stage of further involution. The same involution is traceable in his lyrical poetry. *Mili and Haidhia* was followed by *Battle Songs* in which the poet casts himself as the Albanian Tyrtaeus. *Mino,* lamenting his son's murder, shows Schirò a consummate craftsman in the footsteps of Carducci (he even employs classical prosody). His transformation from an academic to an official poet is complete with *Songs of the Fasces,* his last and poorest work.

The same is true for writers of the younger generations. Poradeci, a genuine lyrical poet, lost his vein, affected by the flattery of admirers who saw him as the Tosk Orthodox counterpart of Fishta — he wrote only pastiches of his own poems after his youthful *Dance of the Stars*. Koliqi, whose *Merchant of Flags* marks a date in the development of the short story, wrote only mediocre stuff after his fascist consecration. The most talented poet of the diaspora, Camaj, wrote perhaps his best poems while a student in Yugoslavia and Italy. Siliqi's poetry deteriorated when he accepted to be the Party's official bard. And it is interesting to note that Kadare, whose poems and novel refreshed contemporary socialist literature, has been showing signs of fatigue after his subsequent falling in line.

The following chapter on the periodization of Albanian literature takes in consideration the peculiar traits discussed in this chapter. The criteria of the periodization have already been stated in the Foreword. A product of ethnic culture, Albanian literature is most meaningful as an anthropological document, its artistic relevance being subordinate.

VI.

PERIODIZATION OF ALBANIAN LITERATURE

1. THE CULTURAL MOSAIC OF THE PRE-NATIONALIST PERIOD: 1555-1881.
   - 1a. Early Gheg Catholic ecclesiastic writers: doctrinal and linguistic works (mid 16th-early 18th cent.).
   - 1b. Early Italo-Albanian Greek Orthodox ecclesiastic writers: doctrinal works and sacred poetry (end 16th-end 18th cent.).
   - 1c. Moslem writers in Arabic alphabet in the mother country: erotic, satirical, didactic poetry (early 18th-early 19th cent.).
   - 1d. Orthodox writers of the diaspora in Greek alphabet: lexicography, folklore collection, Bible translation (19th cent.).

2. THE ROMANTIC LITERATURE OF THE NATIONAL AWAKENING PERIOD: (1836) 1881-1912 (1924).
   - 2a. Arbëresh romanticism: Calabro-Albanians and Siculo-Albanians (1836-1920).
   - 2b. Scutarene romanticism: clerical and lay writers (1881-1924).
   - 2c. Romantic literature in exile: bourgeois ideologists and democratic-populist writers (1886-1924).

3. THE LITERATURE OF THE INDEPENDENCE-OCCUPATION PERIOD: 1912 (1924) - 1939 (1944).
   - 3a. Post-romantic and conservative writers: folklorism and modernism.
   - 3b. Progressive and revolutionary writers.

4. CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE: 1944-1974.
   - 4a. Albanian socialist realism.
   - 4b. Albanian literature in Yugoslavia.
   - 4c. Albanian writers abroad.

1. THE CULTURAL MOSAIC OF THE PRE-NATIONALIST PERIOD: 1555-1881.

1a. Early Gheg Catholic ecclesiastic writers: doctrinal and lingustic works (mid 16th-early 18th cent.).

Buzuku, Gjon: *Meshari* (Missal), 1555. Translation of liturgical texts.

Budi, Pjetër (1566-1623): *Dottrina Christiana.* Rome 1618. Translation of R. Bellarmino's catechism plus ten religious poems. *Pasëqyra e t'rëfyemit / Specchio di confessione.* Rome 1621. Translation of E. De Boni's work plus a pastoral letter (68 pp.) and three religious poems.

Bardhi, Frano (Franciscus Blancus, 1606-43): *Dictionariun latino-epiroticum.* Rome 1635. About 5,000 entries plus 133 proverbs and idioms. First (Latin-) Albanian dictionary.

Bogdani, Pjetër (1630-88): *Cuneus Prophetarum de Christo Salvatore mundi italice et epirotice contextus.* Padua 1685 (repr. Venice 1691). Original prose and poems by the author and two friends.

Da Lecce, Francesco Maria: *Osservazioni grammaticali nella lingua albanese.* Rome 1716. First Albanian grammar in Gheg by an Italo-Albanian missionary.

Kazazi, Gjon Nikoll (1702-52): *Dotrina e Kështênë.* Rome 1743.

1b. Early Italo-Albanian Greek-Orthodox ecclesiastic writers: doctrinal works and sacred poetry (end 16th-end 18th cent.).

Matranga, Luca: *Embsuame e krështërë / Dottrina Christiana.* Rome 1592. Translation of Fr. Ledesma's catechism (preceded by a prayer in strambotto form).

Brancato, Nicola (1675-1741). Author of sacred poems contained in the Chieuti Codex (1737). Published by Marchianò in *Poesie sacre* (1908), and by Schirò in *Canti tradizionali* (1923).

Figlia, Nicola (1693-1769). Author of sacred poems in the Chieuti Codex. Published by Marchianò in *Poesie sacre,* and by Schirò in *Canti tradizionali.* Also author of a catechism in the Chieuti Codex, published by Marchianò in *Bessarione* 1911.

Variboba, Giulio († 1762?): *Gjella e Shën Mëriis Virgjër* (Life of the Virgin Mary). Rome 1762. First Arbëresh work of art.

Chetta, Nicola (1693-1769). Author of sacred and didactic poems (pub. by Schirò in *Canti tradizionali*) and an unpublished poem (in octaves) on the creation of the world.

1c. Moslem writers in Arabic alphabet in the mother country: erotic, satirical, didactic poetry (early 18th - early 19th cent.).

Frakulla, Nezim († 1760). Author of a *divan* (about 1735). Selections pub. by Hahn in *Albanesische Studien* (1854); and by E. Rossi in *Rivista degli studi orientali* 1945. First Albanian poet.

Naibi, Sulejman († 1772). Author of a *divan.* Myderrizi pub. some poems in *BShSh* (1957) 1.

Dobraçi, Hysen (2nd half of 18th cent.). Author of epic and satirical *beyts,* some of which were published by Jubani (1871).

Pata, Sali (2nd half of 18th centur.). Author of satirical *beyts* (pub. by Jubani).

Kamberi, Hasan Zyko (2nd half of 18th cent.). Author of a *mevlud,* and many lyrical and satirical *beyts.* Myderrizi pub. a selection in *BUShT(ss)* (1955) 1.

Kyçyku, Muhamet (1724-1844). Author of several didactic poems, including *Erveheja* (about 1820), pub. by Vreto in expurgated version (1888).

1d. Orthodox writers of the diaspora in Greek alphabet: lexicography, folklore collection, Bible translation (19th cent.).

Botzaris, Markos (1790-1823). Author of a small Greek-Albanian vocabulary (1809), pub. by L. Skendo in *Kalendari kombiar* 1926.

Gregory of Gijrokastër, Bishop of Euboea, edited *Hẽ kainẽ Diathẽkẽ / Dhiata e Re* (Corfu 1827), a bilingual version of the Gospel, probably translated by V. Meksi.

Camarda, Demetrio (1821-82): *Saggio di grammatologia comparata sulla lingua albanese.* Leghorn 1864. *Appendice al Saggio di grammatologia comparata...* Prato 1886 (a collection of Arbëresh folk songs).

Kristoforidhi, Konstantin (1827-95). Translated several biblical books, including *Ta tessara Evangelia kai ai praxeis tōn Apostolōn / Dhiata e Re ndë gluhë toskërishtte* (Athens 1904). His Albanian-Greek dictionary (written about 1881), *Lexikon tēs Albanikēs glossēs* (Athens 1904) was transliterated by A. Xhuvani (Tirana 1961).

Mitko, Efthim (1820-90): *Albanikē Melissa / Bëlietta Shqipëtare* (The Albanian Bee). Alexandria (Egypt) 1878. First Tosk folk song collection.

2. THE ROMANTIC LITERATURE OF THE NATIONAL AWAKENING PERIOD: (1836) 1881-1912 (1924).

2a. Arbëresh romanticism: Calabro-Albanians and Siculo-Albanians (1836-1926).

2a'. Calabro-Albanians.

De Rada, Girolamo (1814-1903): *Canti di Milosao figlio del despota di Scutari.* Naples 1836 (= *Milosao*), *Canti storici albanesi di Serafina Thopia moglie del principe Nicola Ducagino.* Naples 1836 (= *Serafina*). *Canti di Serafina Thopia...* Naples 1843 (= *Serafina* B). *Canti di Milosao...* Naples 1847 (= *Milosao* B). *L'Albania dal* 1460 *al* 1485. Naples 1847 (= *Albania*). *Storie d'Albania dopo il* 1460. Naples 1848 (= *Albania* B). *Rapsodie di un poema albanese.* Florence 1866 (= *Rapsodie*). *Skanderbegu i pafaan* I. Corigliano Calabro 1868 (= *Skanderbegu* I). *Skanderbegu i pafaan* II. *Ibid.* 1872 (= *Skanderbegu* II). *Skanderbegu i pafaan* I, II, III. Corigliano Calabro 1873 (= *Skanderbegu* I, II, III). *Canti di Milosao... Ibid.* 1873 (= *Milosao* C). *Skanderbegu i pafaan* IV. Naples 1877 (= *Skanderbegu* IV). *Skanderbegu i pafaan* V. Naples 1884 (= *Skanderbegu* V). *La caduta della Reggia d'Albania* I-II in *Fiamuri Arbërit* 1884-87 (= *Rapsodie* B). *Specchio di umano transito. Vita di Serafina Thopia principessa di Ducagino e frammenti de' suoi canti nel secolo XV.* Naples 1887 (= *Serafina* C). *Autobiologia* I, II, III, IV. Cosenza 1898, Naples 1899, Naples 1899, Cosenza 1898.

Santori, Antonio (1819-94). « Vale harees madhe » (Hymn for the Great Happy Event [the 1848 Neapolitan Constitution]) pub. by De Rada in *L'Albanese d'Italia,* 23 Feb. 1848. *Il prigioniero politico libero e reduce per la costituzione del 1848.* Naples 1850. Italian and Albanian poems intermingled. *Krështeu i shëitëruorë me të thënnurën e parakaljessavet...* (The Albanian Made Holy through Recitation of Prayers...). Naples 1855. Liturgical songs, mostly translations. *Emira.* First Albanian drama. Acts I and II were published by De Rada in *Antologia albanese* (Naples 1896); act II in *Fiamuri i Arbërit,* Nov. 1887. Santori is author of many unpublished writings (in Biblioteca Civica, Cosenza): a cycle of six « romanzetti » (pastoral poems); a « novelletta »; four « melodrammi »; an incomplete novel, etc.

Straticò, Vincenzo (1822-86). Author of several popular socialist poems. A. Straticò translated « The Proletarian » in *Manuale* (1896).

Serembe, Giuseppe (1843-91): *Poesie italiane e canti originali tradotti dall'albanese.* Cosenza 1883. *Vjershe* (Poems). Milan 1926 (ed. C. Serembe).

Bilotta, Bernardo (1843-1918): *Vjersha të përljipëm / Versi lugubri.* Castrovillari 1894. *Shpata Skanderbekut ndë Dibrët poshtë* (Scanderbeg's Sword in Lower Dibër). Tirana 1967 (ed. E. Giordano).

2a". Siculo-Albanians.

Dara, Gabriele (1826-85): *Kënka e sprasme e Balës* (Last Song of Bala). Catanzaro 1906 (partial publication in *Arbri i ri,* June 1887).

Schirò, Giuseppe (1865-1927): *Rapsodie albanesi.* Palermo 1887. *Mili e Haidhia.* Palermo 1900 (first published in *Archivio albanese,* 1891). *Te dheu i huaj* (In the Foreign Land). Palermo 1900. Enlarged edition, Palermo 1940. *Kënkat e luftës* (Battle Songs). Palermo 1907. *Canti sacri delle colonie albanesi di Sicilia.* Naples 1907 (includes religious poems by the collector). *Canti tradizionali e altri saggi delle colonie albanesi di Sicilia.* Naples 1923. A collection of the Siculo-Albanian oral poetry and sacred songs, plus « Mino », a poem on the death of the poet's son. *Kënkët e litorit* (Songs of the Fasces). Palermo 1926. *Këthimi* (Homecoming). Florence 1965 (ed. G. Schirò Jr).

Crispi-Glaviano, Francesco (1852-1933): *Mbi Malin e Truntafilevet* (On the Mountain of the Roses). Palermo 1963 (ed. M. Sciambra). Written before 1912.

2b. Scutarene romanticism: clerical and lay writers (1881-1924).

2b'. Clerical writers.

De Martino, Leonard, O.F.M. (1830-1923): *L'arpa di un italo-albanese.* Venice 1881. The fountainhead of Gheg italianate metrics.

Nikaj, Ndoc, Dom (1864-1951): *Vakinat e Shejtes Kish* (History of the Holy Church). Rome 1888. *Marcja e kshtenimi n'fillés t'vet* (Marcia, or the Origins of Christianity); *Shkodra e rrethueme* (The Siege of Scutari). Scutari 1892; 1913. Historical novels. *Historija e Shqypnis* (History of Albania). Brussels 1917. *Lulet në thes* (Flowers in a Bag); *Bukurusha*; *Burbuqja.* Scutari 1913; 1918; 1920. Historical novels.

Mjeda, Ndré, S.J. (1866-1937): *Juvenilia.* Scutari 1917. Includes « Vaji i bylbylit » (The Nightingale's Lament), first published in an anthology, *Shahiri elierz* (The Honest Lover), Scutari 1887. « Lirija » (Freedom), pub. in *Leka* 1937 (written in 1910-11); « Lissus » in *Hylli i dritës* 1921; « Scodra » in *Kumbona e së Dielles* 1932. Poems in sonnets.

Fishta, Gjergj, O.F.M. (1871-1940): *Te Ura e Rrzhanicës* (At the Rrzhanica Bridge); *Vranina.* Zara 1905; 1907. Epic poems. *Anzat e Parnasit* (The Wasps of Parnassus). Sarajevo 1907. A satirical collection. *Pika voese* (Dewdrops). Scutari 1909. Lyrical poems (*Mrizi i Zanave,* Noontide of the Muses, 1913, is an enlarged edition). *Gomari i Babatasit* (Babatasi's Donkey). Scutari 1923. A satirical « dramatic poem ». *Vallja e Parrîzit* (The Dance of Paradise). Scutari 1925. Religious poems. *Juda Makabé; Shqyptarja e gjytetnueme* (The Civilized Albanian Woman); *Jerina ase Mbretnesha e luleve* (Jerina, or the Queen of Flowers). Melodrams. *Lahuta e Malcís* (The Highland Lute). Scutari 1937. A national epic.

Prennushi, Vinçenc, O.F.M. (1885-1948): *Kangë popullore gegnishte* (Gheg Folk Songs). Sarajevo 1911. *Gjeth e lule* (Leaves and Flowers). Scutari 1924.

2b". Lay writers.

Jubani, Giuseppe [Zef] (1848-80): *Raccolta di canti popolari e rapsodie di poemi albanesi.* Trieste 1871. First Gheg folk song collection, including *beyts* by Dobraçi and Pata.

Mosi, Hilë (1885-1933): *Këngat shqipe* (Albanian Songs). Salonika 1909. Mostly

folk songs. *Zâni i atdheut* (The Voice of the Fatherland). Trieste 1913. Patriotic songs by a guerillero. *Lotët e dashnís* (Tears of Love), Scutari 1916.

Siliqi, Risto (1882-1936): *Pasqyra e ditëvet të përgjakëshme* (A Mirror of the Bloody Days). Trieste 1912. A lyrical record of the 1908-11 armed Gheg highland insurrection in which he participated.

Gurakuqi, Luigj (1879-1925): *Vargënimi n'gjuhë shqype* (Albanian Versification). Naples 1906. First Albanian treatise of (Italianate) prosody. *Vjersha* (Poems). Bari 1941 (ed. Gj. Kamsi). Gurakuqi, a major exponent of Albanian democracy, was murdered in exile.

2. Romantic literature in exile: Bourgeois ideologists and democratic-populist writers (1886-1924).

2c'. Bourgeois ideologists.

Vasa, Pashko (Vassa Pasha), 1825-92. Ideologist of Gheg nationalism. Author of a popular poem, « O My Country! », a volume of poems in Italian, and a novel in French, *Bardha de Témal* (Paris 1890). Turkish Governor of Lebanon.

Frashëri, Naim (1846-1900). Ideologist of Tosk nationalism and representative of Albanian Bektashism: *Bagëti e bujqësija* (Herds and Crops). Bucharest 1886. A bucolic poem. *Lulet e verës* (Spring Flowers); *Parajsa dhe fjala fluturake* (Paradise and Winged Words). Bucharest 1890; 1894. Lyrical poems. *Qerbelaja.* Bucharest 1898. A Bektashi religious epic. *Istori e Skënderbeut.* Bucharest 1898. A national epic.

Frashëri, Sami (1850-1904). Author of philological works as well as plays in Turkish — A. Ypi translated *Besa* (The Pledged Word, 1901), a drama. A major ideological work, *Shqipëria ç'ka qënë, ç'është dhe ç'do të bëhetë* (Albania: Past, Present and Future), Bucharest 1899, is attributed to him.

Konitza, Faik (1875-1942). Essayist, editor of the influential *Albania* (1897-1910). Author of « Dr. Gjëlpëra » (Mr. Needle), a satirical narrative pub. in *Dielli* 1924-25. Minister of Albania in Washington during the monarchist period.

Skendo, Lumo, pen name of Midhat Frashëri (1880-1949). Ideologist and representative of Albanian nationalism. Editor of *Diturija* (1909-16; 1926-29) and author of the first Albanian collection of short stories, *Hi dhe shpuzë* (Ashes and Embers), Sofia 1915. Leader of the nationalistic organization Balli Kombëtar (National Front) during World War II.

2c". *Democratic-populist writers.*

Shiroka, Filip (1859-1935): *Zâni i zêmrës* (The Voice of the Heart). Scutari 1933 (written in 1903).

Çajupi, pen name of Andon Chako (1866-1930): *Baba Tomorri* (Father Tomor). Cairo 1902. Poems. *Katërmbëdhjet vjeç dhëndërr* (A Bridegroom at Fourteen). Cairo 1902. A comedy in verse. Unpublished: « Dhjat'e vjetër e çfaqurë » (The Old Testament Revealed), a satirical work (about 7,000 lines).

Asdren, acronym of Aleks Stavro Drenova (1872-1947): *Rreze drite* (Sunrays); *Endra e lotë* (Dreams and Tears); *Psallme murgu* (A Poor Man's Psalms). Bucharest 1903; 1912; 1930. Volumes of poems.

Grameno, Mihal (1872-1931). Author of two long short stories, a comedy, a historical play, a volume of poems, and a short novel, *Oxhaku* (Gentry), Korçë 1909. *Kryengritja shqipëtare* (The Albanian Revolution) Korçë 1925, is a narrative of pre-independence guerrilla activities in which he participated.

Noli, Fan (1882-1965). A major political figure: Premier of Albania in 1924, and Primate of the Albanian Orthodox Church in America (1932-65). A publicist (editor of *Dielli* 1909; 1910-11; 1915-16; *The Adriatic Review*, 1915; *Republika*, 1930-33); a translator of great works of literature (Shakespeare, Cervantes, Ibsen, Khayam); a literary critic (in his introductions to the translations); a historian (*Histori e Skënderbeut*, Boston 1921), Noli is also author of *Israelitë e Filistinë* (Boston 1907), a biblical play; and *Albumi* (Boston 1948), a collection of mostly political poems.

3. THE LITERATURE OF THE INDEPENDENCE-OCCUPATION PERIOD: 1912 (1924) - 1939 (1944).

3a. *Post-romantic and conservative writers: folklorism and modernism.*

Floqi, Kristo (1873-194?). A most prolific writer and a major playwright: *Fe e kombësi* (Religion and Nationalism). Boston 1912. A historical play. *Dhëndërr me përdhuni* (The Reluctant Bridegroom), in *Dielli* 1912; a one-act sketch. Floqi produced the rest of his work in Albania, in 1924-39; about twenty plays and one-act sketches, including: *Qerthulli politik* (The Political Caucus), *E bija e bankjerit* (The Banker's Daughter), *Reklamë e bllofë* (Advertisement and Bluff), *Ministri kandidat*; two collections of poems, *Shkëndija* (The Spark), and *Antologjija shqiptare*; an epic, *Epopeja e Toskërisë* (The Tosk Epos).

Asllani, Ali (1884-196?): *Hanko Halla* (The Lady Aunt). Tirana 1942. A narrative folkloric poem depicting upper-class urban mores.

Poradeci, Lasgush, pen name of Lazar Gusho (b. 1899): *Vallja e yjvet* (The Dance of the Stars). Bucharest 1933. *Ylli i zëmrës* (The Star of the Heart). Bucharest 1937. This talented transcendental poet who wrote pastiches of his own poems during World War II has been silent ever since.

Koliqi, Ernest (1903-75): *Kushtrimi i Skanderbegut* (Scanderbegu's Warcry). Tirana 1924. An epic poem. *Hija e maleve* (Mountain Shades). Zara 1929. Short stories. *Gjurmat e stinvet* (The Tracks of Seasons). Tirana 1933. Poems. *Tregtar flamujsh* (Merchant of Flags). Tirana 1935. Short stories portraying middle-class Scutarene mores. *Shija e bukës së mbrûme* (The Taste of Homemade Bread), Rome 1960, is a novel.

Haxhiademi, Etëhem (b. 1907). Author of classical tragedies: *Akili*; *Aleksandri*; *Ulisi* (Tirana 1931); historical plays in classical garb: *Pirroja* (1934); *Skenderbeu* (1935). *Lyra* is a volume of poems.

Kuteli, Mitrush, pen name of Dhimitër Pasko (b. 1907): *Netë shqipëtare* (Albanian Nights). Bucharest 193?. Lyrical short stories. *Ago Jakupi*. Tirana 1943. Impressionistic short stories. *Sulm e lotë* (Blows and Tears), Tirana 1941. Nationalist poems.

Kokona, Vedat (b. 1913): *Dritë dhe hije* (Light and Shade, 1939), post-symbolist poems. *Yje të këputura* (Falling Stars, 1940), modernistic short stories. *Shtatë Prilli* (The Seventh of April, 1943), a patriotic poem.

Haki, Nexhat (b. 1914): *Këngët e zambares* (Pipe Songs, 1939). Poems in popular style.

Kokalari, Musine (b. 1920): *Siç më thotë nënua plakë* (As My Old Mother Tells Me, 1941). A folkloric narrative portryaing the urban mores of Gjirokastër.

3b. *Progressive and revolutionary writers.*

Stërmilli, Haki (1895-1953). Author of patriotic plays and two novels, *Burgu* (The Prison), and *Sikur t'isha djalë* (If I Were a Boy, 1936), in which he portrays the degenerative aspects of prison life and discusses the emancipation of women respectively.

Malëshova, Sejfulla (189?-197?). Major communist ideologist and writer. *Vjersha* (Poems), written mostly in exile, appeared in 1945. He fell into disgrace in 1948, and has not been heard ever since.

Migjeni, acronym of Millosh Gjergj Nikolla (1911-38). A school teacher who initiated socialist poetry in Albania with *Vargjet e lira* (Free Verse) in 1936 (confiscated by the government). *Veprat* (Works), edited by S. Luarasi (1961) contains his published and unpublished poems and prose.

Marko, Petro (b. 1913) wrote, in the thirties, poems some of which show Mayakovsky's influence. *Hasta la vista* (1959) is a novel portraying his experience in the Spanish civil war (he fough with the International Brigades).

Spasse, Sterjo (b. 1914): *Nga jeta në jetë: Pse?* (From Life to Life: Why?). An autobiographical short novel (1935). *Afërdita* (1944) is the story of a village woman teacher. After the liberation, Spasse wrote several novels, including *Ata nuk ishin vetëm* (They Were Not Alone, 1952 — Prize of the Republic), and *Afërdita përsëri në fshat* (Afërdita's Return to the Village, 1955).

4. CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE: 1944-1974.

4a. *Albanian socialist realism.*

Shuteriqi, Dhimitër (b. 1915). President of the Albanian League of Writers and Artists, 1946-73. Author of poems: « Enverit » (To Enver, 1945); and *Mbi krah'n e praruar të paqës* (On the Golden Wings of Peace, 1950). *Çlirimtarët* (The Liberators, 1952/1954) is a novel (Prize of the Republic, 2nd class). More relevant his work as a literary critic.

Çaçi, Aleks (b. 1916): *Ashtu Myzeqe!* (Very well, Muzeqe! 1947) is a hymn to the emancipation of the poor peasants and serfs of Muzeqe. *Këngët e dheut* (Songs of the Earth, 1951) includes poems on kolkhozes and cooperatives. « Ti je, Myzeqe? » (It's you, Myzeqe?), in *Nëndori* (1969) 12, celebrates the achievement of collectivization.

Gjata, Fatmir (b. 1922): *Këngët e maleve* (Mountain Songs, 1954), includes « Këngë për Partizanin ‚Benko », a folk-like ballad. *Përmbysja* (The Overthrow, 1954), *Tana* (1955, Prize of the Republic), and *Këneta* (The Marsh, 1959) are novels.

Siliqi, Llazar (b. 1924). Official bard of the revolution in the forties and fifties. *Prishtina* 1949. *Rruga e lumtunis* (The Road to Happiness, 1950); *Vjersha dhe poema* (Short and Long Poems, 1953); *Ringjallje* (Resurrection, 1965).

Xoxa, Jakov (b. 1923) has been loyal to his Muzeqe provenance. Two volumes of short stories, *Novela* (1949/158) were followed by a play, *Osumi gjëmon* (The Osum River Roars). His novel, *Lumi i vdekur* (The Dead River, 1967) is representative of Albanian socialist realism.

Kadare, Ismail (b. 1936) chief responsible for giving the latter a twist. *Frymëzi met djaloshare* (Inspirations of Youth, 1954) was followed by *Endërrimet* (Reverie, 1957), and *Princesha Argjiro* (The Princess Argjiro, 1958). *Vjersha dhe poema* (1961) established him as the leading poet of the new genera-

tion. His controversial novel, *Gjenerali i ushtërisë së vdekur* (The General of the Dead Army, 1963) and his autobiographical *Qyteti i Jugut* (The Southern City), first published in *Nëndori* 12 (1964), introduce daring narrative techniques and interpret reality in a lyrical, unorthodox way. *Dasma* (The Wedding, 1968) shows a lowering of tone, which is also found in his subsequent publications.

Xhuvani, Dhimitër (b. 1934). Accused of bourgeois revisionism for his novel *Tuneli* (The Tunnel, 196?), won first prize with his subsequent novel, *Përsëri në këmbë* (Standing Up Again, 1970), hailed by some as a masterpiece of Albanian narrative.

Agolli, Dritëro (b. 1931). *Në rrugë dolla* (On the Road, 1958), and *Hapat e mija n'asfalt* (Walking on Asphalt, 1961) show this young writer who takes pride in his peasant stock (« Devoll, Devoll! » 1964) already intent on success (he is now President of the League of Writers and Artists). « Vjersha të reja » (New Poems) — in *Nëndori* (1971) 5 — are evidence that genuine socialist poetry has finally come into existence, and that socialist realism is largely passé.

4b. *Albanian literature in Yugoslavia.*

Rela, Josif (1895-1966): *Vepra. Dramat.* Prishtinë 1968. Twelve plays and sketches, of which the best are *Nita,* and *Kungulli* (The Pumpkin).

Gjerqeku, Enver (b. 1927): *Bebzat e mallit* (Lovely Eyes, 1960); *Gjurmat e jetës* (Traces of Life, 196?); *Blerim i vonuem* (Belated Verdure, 1966). A lyrical poet.

Isaku, Murat (b. 1928): *Zani i malit* (The Mountain Voice, 1960), poems. *Dielli e din rrugën e vet* (The Sun Knows Its Orbit, 1965), a novel.

Kërveshi, Muhamet (b. 1935): *Ngjyrat e dashunisë* (Tinges of Love, 1964); *Portrete në miniaturë* (Miniature Portraits, 1966); *Hijet* (Shadows, 1968). A lyrical poet.

Shkreli, Azem (b. 1938). This youngest Kosovar poet published his first collection of poems, *Bulza* (Buds) while a high school student. A novel, *Karvani i bardhë* (The White Caravan, 1960) was followed by another volume of poems, *Engjujt e rrugëve* (Angels on the Road, 1963). *Lotët e maleve* (Mountain Tears, 1974) marks a second, rather involute, period.

4c. *Albanian writers abroad.*

Solano, Francesco (b. 1914). A Calabro-Albanian Byzantine priest, author of *Bubuqe t'egra* (Wild Buds), Buenos Aires 1946. Poems and short stories have appeared in *Shêjzat* under the pen name of Dushko Vetmo.

Pipa, Arshi (b. 1920): *Lundërtarë* (Sailors). Tirana 1944. Poems. *Libri i burgut* (The Prison Book). Rome 1958. Poems. *Rusha.* Munich 1968. An epic-dramatic poem. *Meridiana.* Munich 1969. An anthology of his lyrical poetry. Pipa lives in Minneapolis, USA.

Camaj, Martin (b. 1927). A professor of Albanian at the University of Munich, Camaj published his first volumes of poems, *Nji fyell ndër male* (A Flute in the Mountains, 1953), and *Kanga e vërrinit* (Song of Lowland Pastures, 1954) in Yugoslavia while a student. *Diella* (Rome 1958) is a narrative intermingled with poems. His last volumes are *Legjenda* (Munich 1964), and *Lyrika mes dy moteve* (Middle Age Poems), Munich 1967.

Rexha-Bala, Kosovë (b. 193?). *Kronika poetike* (Göteborg 1974).

VII.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ALBANIAN STUDIES (1504-1974)

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS
(periodicals or serials frequently quoted)

AF	Albanische Forschungen. Munich.
ArhASJE	*Arhiv za arbanasku starinu, jezik, i etnologiju.* Belgrade.
BBGG	*Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata.* Grottaferrata.
BISh	*Buletin i Institut të Shkencave.* Tirana.
BShSh	*Buletini për shkencat shoqërore.* Tirana.
BUShT(ss)	*Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës. Seria shkencat shoqërore.* Tirana.
DAWW(ph)	*Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.* Vienna.
ESh	*Etnografia shqiptare.* Tirana.
GBI	*Godišnjak Balkanološkog Instituta.* Sarajevo.
GEISAN	*Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta Srpske Akademie Nauka.* Belgrade.
GjAlb	*Gjurmime albanologjike.* Priština.
GMKM	*Glasnik Muzeja Kosova i Metohije.* Priština.
KDSA	*Konferenca e Dytë e Studimeve Albanologjike* (Tirana, 12-18 Jan. 1968). Tirana 1969.
KPSA	*Konferenca e Parë e Studimeve Albanologjike* (Tirana 15-21 Nov. 1962). Tirana 1965.
SAlb	*Studia albanica.* Tirana.
SAWW(ph)	*Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der (kaiserlichen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.* Vienna.
SFil	*Studime filologjike.* Tirana.
SHis	*Studime historike.* Tirana.
Shêjzat	*Shêjzat / Le Pleiadi.* Rome.
SOF	*Südost-Forschungen.* Munich.
ZBal	*Zeitschrift für Balkanologie.* Berlin.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

1. Separate publications (in italics) and articles from periodicals or serials (within quotation marks) are listed by the name of the author(s) in alphabetical order. Works by the same author are listed in chronological order.

2. Bibliographical works are listed by author(s), or periodical. Manek-Pekmezi-Stotz (1909), Legrand-Guys (1912) supplemented by Petta (1955), Çoba-Prêla (1965), and Shuteriqi (1965) are basic for the period from the origins (14th-15th centuries) to the end of the 18th cent. (Shuteriqi covers the first half of the 19th cent.) Guys (1938) is important for 1900-10; *Indogermanisches Jahrbuch [IJ]* for 1916-48 (Jokl: 1916-38; Tagliavini: 1939-41); Kastrati (1959) for 1944-58; *Südosteuropa-Bibliographie [SOEB]* for 1945-65. Daka (1964-67: linguistics only) covers the period from the second half of the 19th cent. to 1944.

3. Our essay is based on Legrand-Guys, *IJ*, Kastrati, and *SOEB*. Stadtmüller (bibliography in *Forschungen*) and Hamp (bibliography in « Albanian ») have also been consulted (for history and linguistics respectively). The bibliography for the period after 1965 has been gathered from publications of books and peridiocals following that year.

4. Of these, the most important is *Studia albanica* (1964-), published by Universiteti Shtetëror i Tiranës (State University of Tirana) — by Akademia e Shkencave (Academy of Sciences) since 1973 —, a semiannual in French and other foreign languages. *Studime filologjike* and *Studime historike* are quarterlies in Albanian usually containing summaries in French (both published by the University of Tirana). These two periodicals are the twin heirs of *Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës. Seria shkencat shoqërore* (1958-63). *BUShT (ss)* continues *Buletini për Shkencat shoqërore* (1952-56), which in turn continues *Buletin i Institutit të Shkencave* (1948-51) — *Buletin i Institutit të Studimeve* for 1947. *Nëndori* (November, 1953-73; *Nëntori*, afterwards), organ of the League of Albanian Writers and Artists, includes articles on literary and art criticism. *Gjurmime albanologjike* (Albanological research) organ first (1962-65) of Fakulteti Filozofik i Prishtinës, and then (since 1965), of Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, contains articles in both Albanian and Serbo-Croatian (often with summaries in French) as well as in other languages. *Shêjzat / Le Pleiadi* (1957-74) an Italo-Albanian periodical published in Rome, has articles in Albanian and Italian and occasionally other languages too.

5. Entries in languages other than Latin, French, German and Italian, are accompanied by English translations within round parentheses at the end of the entry, except for the entries whose meaning is transparent. For economy's sake, those entries have not been translated since they are either couched in scientific terminology, or include words whose meaning can be easily understood in context with the rest. Thus, (Ajeti, I.:) *Historia e gjuhës shqipe. Morfologjia historike* means obviously « History of the Albanian Language. Historical Morphology ». And (Arš, G. L.): *Albanija i Epir v konce XVIII-načale XIX v.* is easily translated as « Albania and Epirus: end 18th cent.-beginning 19th cent. ». Likewise, one has no difficulty in identifying (Bires, K. E.): *Arbanites hoi dōrois tou neōterou Hellēnismou. Historia tōn Hellēnōn Arbanitōn* as a history of the Greco-Albanians.

6. In transliterated Modern Greek, /b/ stands for /mp/ as well as [v], while /⁻/ stands for both the Greek circumflex and the macron sign.

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PARTITO DEI LAVORATORI ITALIANI

REGIONE SICILIA

STATUTO

DEL

FASCIO DEI LAVORATORI

PROVINCIA DI PALERMO

Sezione Piana dei Greci

PALERMO
TIPOGRAFIA EDITRICE *TEMPO*
Domenico Vena
1892

PROGRAMMA

Considerando: che nel presente ordinamento della Società umana, gli uomini sono costretti a vivere in due classi: da un lato i lavoratori sfruttati, dall'altro i capitalisti detentori e monopolizzatori delle ricchezze sociali;

— che i salariati d'ambo i sessi, di ogni arte e condizione, formano, per la loro dipendenza economica, il proletariato costretto a uno stato di miseria, di inferiorità e di oppressione;

— che tutti gli uomini, purchè concorrano secondo le loro forze a creare o a mantenere i beneficii della vita sociale, hanno lo stesso diritto a fruire di cotesti beneficii, primo dei quali la sicurezza sociale dell'esistenza.

Riconoscendo: — che gli attuali organismi economico-sociali, difesi dall'odierno sistema politico, rappresentano il predominio dei monopolizzatori delle ricchezze sociali e naturali sulla classe lavoratrice;

CERTIFICATO D'AMMISSIONE

N. 97 N° 52

Il sottoscritto dichiara che il compagno Bello Giorgio cl. Doyci

figlio di Giorgio

e di:

nato a Piana

di professione Contadino

è stato ammesso oggi a far parte del Fascio dei Lavoratori.

Piana dei Greci li 1° Maggio 1893

Tabella dei versamenti mensili

MESI	1893-94	1894-95	1895-96	1896-97	1897-98
entrata	1.30				
maggio	30				
aprile	20				
Maggio	40				
Giugno	20				
Luglio					
Agosto					
Settembre					
Ottobre					
Novembre					
Dicembre					
Gennaio					
Febbraio					
Marzo					
Aprile					

Fascio dei Lavoratori
PIANA DEI GRECI

Plate 1.

Admission certificate of a member of the Fasci dei Lavoratori of Piana dei Greci bearing the handwriting of N. Barbato and signed by him.

THE CHIEUTI MANUSCRIPT: « KENKEZA TË TJERA TË PLEQËRISË »

(from Canto 18, « *Vlastari dhe Shega* »)

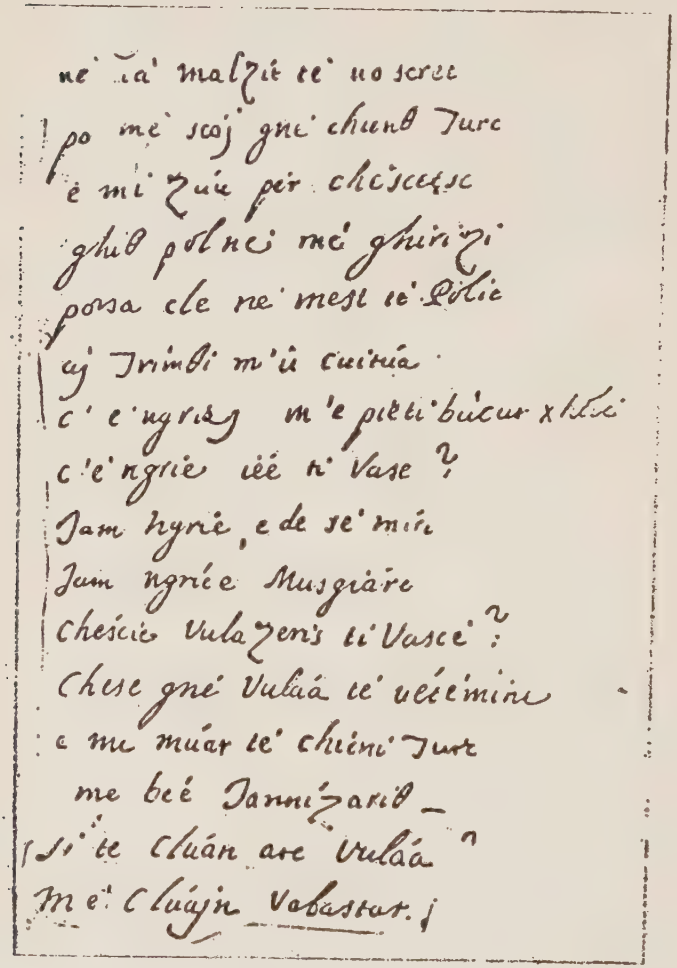


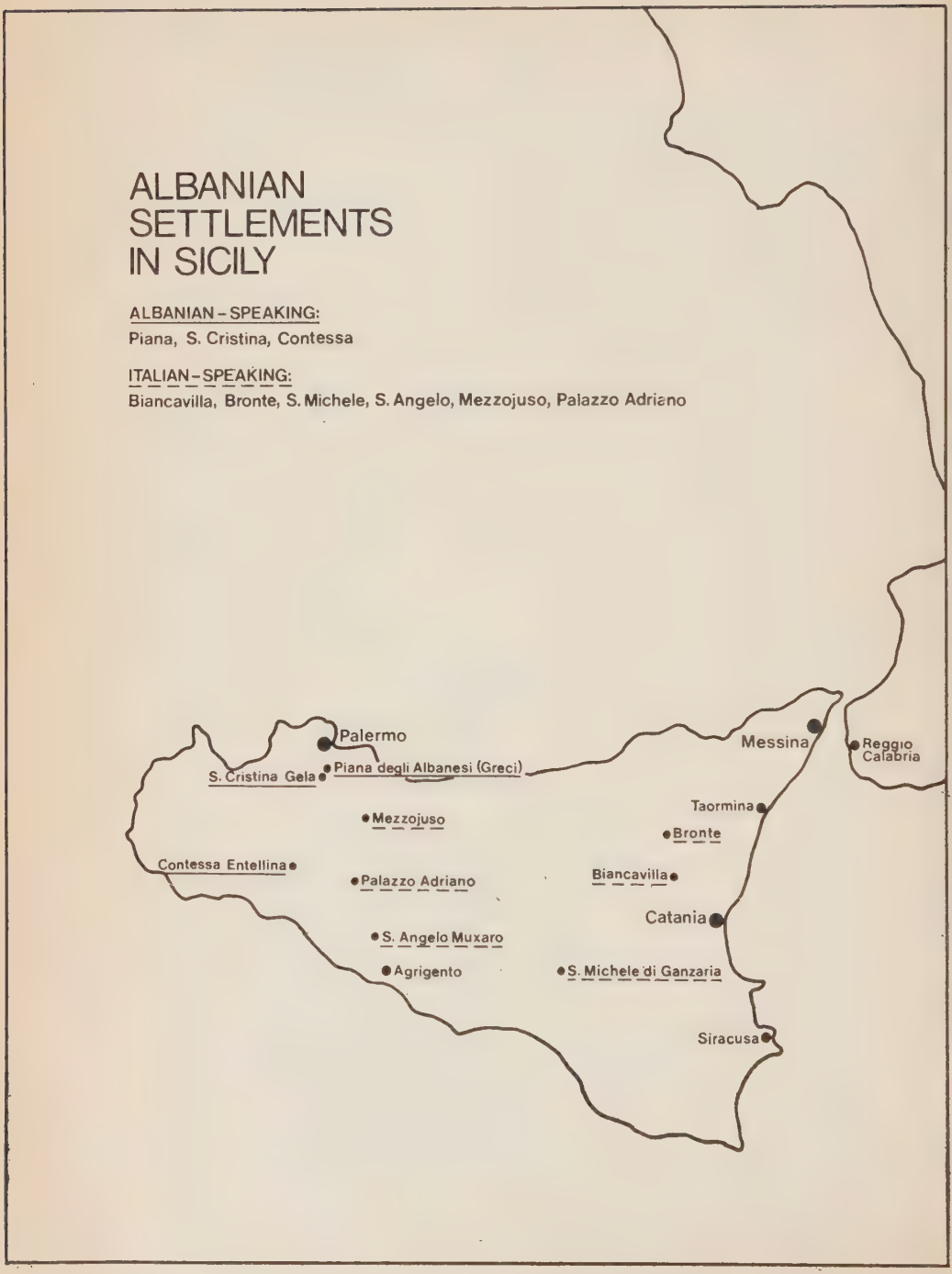
Plate 2.

(MBLEDHËS TË HERSHËM TË FOLKLORIT SHQIPTAR 1, p. 37)

MAP I

ALBANIAN SETTLEMENTS IN CONTINENTAL ITALY
UNDERLINED LOCALITIES ARE ALBANOPHONES
Campomarino
Montecilfone
Portocannone
Chieuti
Ururi
Biferno
S. Croce di Magliano
S. Paolo di Civitate
Mte. Gargano
Tavoliere
Casalnuovo Monterotaro
Casalvecchio di Puglia
Campobasso
Foggia
Castelluccio de' Sauri
Faeto
Greci
Panni
Ofanto
Bari
Barile
Ginestra
Maschito
Murge
Bradano
Potenza
Brindisi di Montagna
Montemesola
Monteiasi
Carosino
Taranto
Monteparano
S. Giorgio Ionico
S. Marzano di S. Giuseppe
Roccaforzata
Fragagnano
Faggiano
S. Crispieri
Sinni
S. Costantino A.
S. Paolo A.
Farneta
Castroregio
Plataci
Frascineto
Civita
S. Basile
Eianina
Acquaformosa
Lungro
Firmo
Spezzano A.
Crati
S. Caterina A.
S. Cosmo A.
Vaccarizzo A.
S. Giorgio A.
Macchia A.
Cervicati
Mongrassano
Cerzeto
Cavallerizzo
S. Demetrio Corone
S. Martino di Finita
S. Sofia d'Epiro
Rota Greca
S. Benedetto Ullano
Marri
Falconara A.
Cosenza
Pallagorio
Carfizzi
S. Nicola dell'Alto
Neto
Serra d'Aiello
Arietta
Marcedusa
Zagarise
Andali
Gizzeria
Zangarona
Catanzaro
Carafia di Catanzaro
Vena di Maida

MAP II


ALBANIAN SETTLEMENTS IN SICILY
ALBANIAN – SPEAKING:
Piana, S. Cristina, Contessa
ITALIAN – SPEAKING:
Biancavilla, Bronte, S. Michele, S. Angelo, Mezzojuso, Palazzo Adriano
Palermo
S. Cristina Gela
Piana degli Albanesi (Greci)
Mezzojuso
Contessa Entellina
Palazzo Adriano
S. Angelo Muxaro
Agrigento
Messina
Reggio Calabria
Taormina
Bronte
Biancavilla
Catania
S. Michele di Ganzaria
Siracusa

MAP III

TOPOGRAPHY OF DE RADA'S WORKS SUGGESTING ALBANIAN MIGRATIONS IN NORTHERN GREECE AND SOUTHERN ITALY
CONSTANTINOPLE
BULGARIA
MONTENEGRO
ADRIATIC SEA
APULIA
IONIAN SEA
CALABRIA
MACEDONIA
THESSALY
EPIRUS
ALBANIA
PRIŠTINA
GJAKOVË (ĐAKOVICA)
SKOPJE
TITOV VELES
DEJË
SHKODER (SCUTARI)
DIBËR (DEBAR)
OHRID
BITOLA
ELBASAN
KRUJË (CROJA)
DURRES (DURAZZO)
VLORË (VALONA)
HIMARË (CHIMARA)
DELVINË
ZAGORI
IOANNINA
ARTA
PARGA
BAY OF AMBRACIA
SALONIKA
OLYMPUS
TEMPE
LARISSA
RENDINA
KOTOR (CATTARO)
DUKAGJIN
MACCHIA
SILA
MILOŠAO: SCUTARI → SALONIKA & TEMPE → PARGA → MACCHIA
SERAFINA: DUKAGJIN ← BAY OF AMBRACIA → SILA GRANDE
ALBANIA: CATTARO ← OHRID ← IOANNINA → DELVINË → SILA GRANDE
SKANDERBEGU: SCUTARI → GJAKOVË → VELES → ADRIANOPOLIS → CONSTANTINOPLE → ARTA → HIMARË → SILA GRANDE

MAP IV

ALBANIAN SETTLEMENTS
IN PELOPONNESUS
FROM PHILIPPSON'S ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP
OF THE PELOPONNESUS
(Petermanns Geograf. Mitteilungen,
Beilage zum 36. Band, 1890, Tafel 3)
Athen
Salamis
Aegina
Methana
Poros
Hydra
Spezzia
Nauplia
Korinth
ACHAIA
KORINTHIA
ARGOLIS
ARCADIA
LACONIA
Patras
Mesolongion
Modon
Coron
Monemvasia
LEGEND:
ALBANIAN ZONES, 15th CENT.:
ACHAIA, KORINTHIA, ARGOLIS,
ARCADIA, LACONIA
(marked by a broken line - - - - -)
ALBANIAN ENCLAVES, 19th CENT.:

PAPAHAGI'S ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP OF THE AROMUNIANS

NINSULA BALCANICA

1:750.000

rom: Tache Papahagi, Dic-
oţarul dialectului aromîn.
carest 1963)

- Villages inhabited by Aromunians for the most part
- Villages in which also Aromunians live
- Cities in which also Aromunians live

MAP V

INDEX

1. Some basic entries (such as Albania, De Rada, Migjeni), have been subdivided in order to help the reader obtain comprehensive information.
2. Entries without ethnic specification are of Albanian or Arbëresh pertinence.
3. Titles of Albanian literary works are given in English — « Periodization of Albanian Literature » provides the original title.
4. Titles of works, accompanied by the author's name in brackets, are given in abbreviated form (see 11n*6*).
5. M is abreviation of « Mentioned », n of « Note ».

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